

District Review Report

Holyoke Public Schools

Review conducted January 20-23 and 26, 2015



Center for District and School Accountability

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education

Organization of this Report

District Review Overview	1
Holyoke Public Schools Profile	2
Contextual Background by District Standard	7
District Review Findings	13
Recommendations	38
Appendix A: Review Team, Activities, Schedule, Site Visit	45
Appendix B: Enrollment, Performance, Expenditures	47
Appendix C: Instructional Inventory	60

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Replay 800-439-2370
www.doe.mass.edu



This document was prepared by the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.

Commissioner

Published February 2015

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an affirmative action employer, is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Inquiries regarding the Department's compliance with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Human Resources Director, 75 Pleasant St., Malden, MA 02148-4906. Phone: 781-338-6105.

© 2015 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Permission is hereby granted to copy any or all parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes. Please credit the "Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education."

This document printed on recycled paper

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370
www.doe.mass.edu



District Review Overview

Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness of system-wide functions, with reference to the six district standards used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE): leadership and governance, curriculum and instruction, assessment, human resources and professional development, student support, and financial and asset management. Reviews identify systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. Review reports may be used by ESE and the district to establish priority for assistance and make resource allocation decisions.

Methodology

Reviews collect evidence for each of the six district standards above. A district review team consisting of independent consultants with expertise in each of the district standards reviews documentation, data, and reports for two days before conducting a four-day district visit that includes visits to individual schools. The team conducts interviews and focus group sessions with such stakeholders as school committee members, teachers' association representatives, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Team members also observe classroom instructional practice. Subsequent to the onsite review, the team meets for two days to develop findings and recommendations before submitting a draft report to ESE. *District review reports focus primarily on the system's most significant strengths and challenges, with an emphasis on identifying areas for improvement.*

Site Visit

The site visit to the Holyoke Public Schools was conducted from January 20-23 and 26, 2015. The site visit included 30.5 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 250 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted focus groups with 37 elementary school teachers, 28 middle school teachers, 52 high school teachers, and 50 parents.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, student performance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instructional practice in 113 classrooms in 10 schools.¹ The team collected data using an instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

¹ Classes at the elementary and middle schools were observed during the January 20 to 23, 2015, onsite review. Observations at the high schools were postponed until January 26, 2015, because of testing during the week of the review.

Holyoke Public Schools Profile

Holyoke has a mayor-council form of government and the chair of the school committee is the mayor. The school committee has ten members and meets bi-weekly.

**Table 1: Holyoke Public Schools
Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment*, 2014-2015**

School Name	School Type	Grades Served	Enrollment	Accountability level	School percentile
Metcalfe Preschool	Preschool	PK-K	224	Insufficient data	Insufficient data
Lawrence	ES	K-3	291	Insufficient data	Insufficient data
Peck	MS	4-8	371	Level 3	6
Donahue	ESMS	K-8	588	Level 3	7
Kelly	ESMS	K-8	586	Level 3	9
McMahon	ESMS	K-8	401	Level 3	12
Morgan	ESMS	K-8	399	Level 5	7
Sullivan	ESMS	K-8	567	Level 2	21
White	ESMS	K-8	424	Level 3	12
Holyoke High School	HS	9-12	1,309	Level 3	11
Dean Vocational Technical HS	HS	9-12	403	Level 4	3
Totals	11 schools	PK-12	5,573		

*as of October 1, 2014

Between 2011 and 2015 overall student enrollment decreased by 5.5 percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and English language learners [ELLs and former ELLs]) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were higher than the median in-district per pupil expenditures for 31K-12 districts of similar size (5,000-7,999 students) in fiscal year 2013: \$16,220 as compared with a median of \$12,487 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance](#)). Actual net school spending has been slightly above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B8 in Appendix B.

Student Performance

Holyoke is a Level 4 district because the state Board of Education designated it as underperforming in 2003. Dean Vocational Technical High School is in Level 4 and Morgan Elementary is in Level 5 because of persistently low performance at the school level.

- The district's highest performing school is Sullivan, which is in the 21st percentile of elementary–middle schools and is in Level 2. It has a cumulative Progress and Performance Index (PPI) of 41 for all students and 50 for high-needs students; the target is 75.
- Six of Holyoke's schools are in Level 3 for being among the lowest performing 20 percent of schools in their grade span. McMahon and White are in the 12th, Kelly is in the 9th, Donahue is in the 7th, and Peck is in the 6th percentile of elementary-middle schools, and Holyoke High School is in the 11th percentile of high schools.
- In these same schools, specific subgroups of students also have particularly low outcomes.
 - McMahon Elementary School's Hispanic/Latino students and English language learners (ELLs) and former ELLs are among the lowest performing 20 percent of subgroups.
 - White Elementary School's students with disabilities, Hispanic/Latino students, and ELLs and former ELLs are among the lowest performing 20 percent of subgroups.
 - Kelly Elementary School's students with disabilities, students from low- income families, Hispanic/Latino Students, and ELLs and former ELLs are among the lowest performing 20 percent of subgroups.
 - The Peck School's students with disabilities, students from low-income families, Hispanic/Latino students, and ELLs and former ELLs are among the lowest performing 20 percent of subgroups.
 - Holyoke High School has persistently low graduation rates for students with disabilities.
- Dean Vocational Technical High is in the 3rd percentile of high schools and is in Level 4 for being among the lowest achieving and least improving schools.
 - Dean Vocational has persistently low graduation rates for students overall as well as many student subgroups: students with disabilities, students from low-income families, Hispanic/Latino students, ELLs and former ELLs, and high-needs students.
 - Dean Vocational has low MCAS participation (less than 90 percent) for Hispanic/Latino students, ELLs and former ELLs, high-needs students, and all students.
- Morgan Full Service Community School is in the 7th percentile of elementary-middle schools and is in Level 5 for being a chronically underperforming school.

The district did not reach its 2014 Composite Performance Index (CPI) targets for ELA, math, and science.

- ELA CPI was 64.3 in 2014, below the district's target of 75.3.
- Math CPI was 58.5 in 2014, below the district's target of 68.7.
- Science CPI was 54.2 in 2014, below the district's target of 64.2.

ELA proficiency rates were below the state rate for the district as a whole and in each tested grade by 18 to 43 percentage points and did not improve between 2011 and 2014 except for in the 10th grade.

ELA proficiency rates varied by school.

- ELA proficiency rates for all students in the district were 34 percent in 2011 and 32 percent in 2014, 37 percentage points below the 2014 state rate of 69 percent.
- ELA proficiency rates were below the state rate by 41 to 43 percentage points in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grades, by 37 percentage points in the 7th and 8th grades, and by 18 percentage points in the 10th grade.
 - Between 2011 and 2014 ELA proficiency rates decreased by 7 percentage points in the 3rd grade, and by 5 percentage points in the 4th and 5th grades. 2014 ELA proficiency rates were lower than the 2011 rate by 1 to 3 percentage points in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.
- ELA proficiency rates increased by 11 percentage points in the 10th grade, from 61 percent in 2011 to 72 percent in 2014, 18 percentage points below the state rate of 90 percent.
- ELA proficiency rates at the K-8 schools ranged from 15 percent at Kelly to 39 percent at Sullivan.
 - Between 2011 and 2014 ELA proficiency rates declined by 6 to 8 percentage points at Kelly, Sullivan, McMahon, and Donahue.
- Holyoke High School's 2014 ELA proficiency rate was 82 percent and Dean Vocational Technical High School's ELA proficiency rate was 47 percent.
 - Between 2011 and 2014 ELA proficiency rates increased by 6 percentage points at Holyoke High School and by 8 percentage points at Dean Vocational Technical High School.

Math proficiency rates were below the state rate in the district as a whole and in each tested grade by 24 to 39 percentage points. Math proficiency rates varied by school.

- Math proficiency rates for all students in the district were 27 percent in 2011 and 28 percent in 2014, 32 percentage points below the state rate of 60 percent.

- Math proficiency rates in the district were below the state rate by 39 percentage points in the 5th grade, by 37 percentage points in the 3rd grade, by 34 percentage points in the 7th grade, by 30 percentage points in the 4th, 6th, and 8th grades, and by 24 percentage points in the 10th grade.
 - Between 2011 and 2014 math proficiency rates improved by 6 percentage points in the 4th and 6th grades and by 3 percentage points in the 5th grade. Math proficiency rates were the same or lower by 1 to 2 percentage points in 2014 than 2011 in the 3rd, 7th, 8th, and 10th grades.
- Math proficiency rates at the K-8 schools ranged from 12 percent at Morgan to 36 percent at Sullivan.
 - Between 2011 and 2014 math proficiency rates increased by 10 percentage points at Kelly and by 3 and 4 percentage points at White and McMahon, and declined by 4 percentage points at Donahue.
- Holyoke High School's 2014 math proficiency rate was 64 percent and Dean Vocational Technical High School's math proficiency rate was 30 percent.
 - Between 2011 and 2014 math proficiency rates declined by 5 percentage points at Holyoke High School and by 7 percentage points at Dean Vocational Technical High School.

**Science proficiency rates were below the state rate for each tested grade and in the district as whole.
Science proficiency rates varied by school.**

- 5th grade science proficiency rates were 11 percent in 2011 and 9 percent in 2014, 44 percentage points below the state rate of 53 percent.
- 8th grade science proficiency rates were 6 percent in 2011 and 9 percent in 2014, 33 percentage points below the state rate of 42 percent.
- 10th grade science proficiency rates increased from 27 percent in 2011 to 45 percent in 2014, 26 percentage points below the state rate of 71 percent.
- Science proficiency rates at the K-8 schools ranged from 1 percent at Kelly to 21 percent at White.
- Holyoke High School's 2014 science proficiency rate was 55 percent and Dean Vocational Technical High School's science proficiency rate was 5 percent.

Holyoke students' growth on the MCAS assessments in Holyoke on average is slower than that of their academic peers statewide.

- On the 2014 MCAS assessments, the district-wide median student growth percentile (SGP) for English language arts was 39; for mathematics, it was 45. Growth rates have been similar over the past four years.
- In four subjects and grades in 2014, median student growth fell below 40: grade 4 English language arts (median SGP of 30), grade 5 English language arts (32), grade 5 mathematics (38), and grade 10 mathematics (39).

Holyoke did not reach the 2014 four year cohort graduation target of 80.0 and the five year cohort graduation target of 85.0 percent.²

- The four year cohort graduation increased from 49.5 percent in 2011 to 60.2 percent in 2014, 25.9 percentage points below the state rate of 86.1 percent.
- The five year cohort graduation increased from 56.1 percent in 2010 to 58.2 percent in 2013, 29.5 percentage points below the state rate of 87.7 percent.
- The Dean Vocational Technical High School has had a particularly low four-year cohort graduation rate, at 41.5 percent in 2014. At Holyoke High School, the four-year cohort graduation rate was 68.4 percent in 2014.
- The annual dropout rate for Holyoke has consistently been more than three times higher than the state rate and was 6.4 percent in 2014, above the statewide rate of 2.0 percent.

² 2014 graduation targets are 80 percent for the four year and 85 percent for the five year cohort graduation rates and refer to the 2013 four year cohort graduation rate and 2012 five year cohort graduation rates.

Contextual Background by District Standard

Leadership and Governance

The Holyoke Public Schools consist of 11 schools. Nine house grades PreK–8 in various configurations, and there are two high schools, a traditional high school and a vocational technical high school. This report covers 10 of the 11 schools. The Morgan Elementary is not included because it is under state receivership.

According to 2014-2015 ESE enrollment data, 5,573 students attend the district's schools. The district's enrollment declined 5.5 percent between 2010 and 2015. Student performance data shows consistently low achievement and growth by all subgroups, with all but one school falling in the bottom 20th percentile of the state. In June 2010, the Dean Vocational Technical High School and the Morgan Elementary School were placed in Level 4 because of their especially low student achievement and absence of growth; the Morgan Elementary School was ultimately designated Level 5 in 2014. Other student indicators such as graduation, dropout, suspension, and attendance rates are also among the lowest in the state.

In 2013 the district hired a new superintendent, Dr. Sergio Paez, who has a background in ELL education. He has been straightforward in communicating to all constituencies the low achievement in the district. Since his arrival In July 2013, in all of his presentations to stakeholders, he has presented a set of data that demonstrates the low performance.

The superintendent has embarked upon a plan to increase achievement, based on his belief that all students can benefit from language development strategies. Dr. Paez's theory of action serves as the organizing construct for the district's Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP), a planning process implemented by the state in Level 4 districts declared underperforming on the basis of a district accountability review. Dr. Paez has used the district's low student achievement data to argue that the district needs to embark upon significant changes.

To this end, the district has established interrelated systems that connect all the district's structures that support classroom instruction, including the supervision of teaching, professional development, and the use of grant monies. The superintendent has been successful in articulating his vision and has established positive working relationships with the school committee, mayor, and community partners. During the site visit, teachers, administrators, and the school committee all appeared to agree with and understand the vision as they begin to implement it.

The changes initiated in Holyoke are intended to be substantive and sweeping. However, progress in advancing district initiatives is being slowed by an absence of meaningful teacher involvement and constructive participation by the Holyoke Teachers' Association. Further, to date little data demonstrates the initiatives' impact on student achievement.

Curriculum and Instruction

Before the superintendent's arrival in the district in 2013, there had been limited efforts to align Holyoke's curriculum to the state curriculum frameworks. Massachusetts framework standards had been added to current units, but much of the content remained the same. The district had a variety of literacy materials including Reading First at the elementary level and America's Choice units at the middle school. School-based coaching positions existed, but their work was at the direction of school principals and not always aligned with district priorities.

Under the new administration, focused efforts to improve teaching and learning began. Curriculum scope and sequences were developed, and content directors led teams of teachers in aligning curriculum documents with current state frameworks. With regard to instruction, directors identified district focus practices: close reading, text-based questioning, explicit vocabulary instruction, and student discourse. These became four of Holyoke's five best practices for instruction (see further description in the Findings section). They were further articulated in the district's Accelerated Improvement Plan and introduced to teachers through professional development.

In July 2014, instructional leadership was reorganized. Three principals were replaced, new director positions were created, and all directors reapplied for their jobs. Coaching positions that had been eliminated were replaced with seven instructional leadership specialists (ILSs). These district-based positions were created to support curriculum development and implementation, to provide group and individual teacher coaching, and to design and implement professional development aligned with the new district focus practices.

There is a new sense of energy and accomplishment in the district around curriculum and instruction. With the exception of the English language development curriculum, alignment to the state curriculum frameworks is close to completion, instructional focus areas have been designated and introduced, and instructional leadership has been refreshed and extended. However, as detailed in the findings, classroom observations suggest that these curriculum changes are not fully and deeply implemented throughout the district.

Assessment

The central office has prioritized building a culture of using data to make instructional decisions. The district provided professional development to principals and teachers on data analysis, and principals and instructional learning specialists are available to support individual teachers as they undertake to change their practice.

This school year the district initiated some districtwide data projects. Quarterly learning walks involved administrators visiting every classroom in the district to assess the implementation of Holyoke's five key instructional strategies. Tables comparing the small improvements observed between the first and second district learning walks were widely available.

In addition, the district designed and implemented the Grade 3 Collaboration Project that involved grade 3 ELA teachers in charting the assessment data available for each of their students and then planning interventions based on their students' individual instructional needs as evidenced in the charts. The district planned to use the Grade 3 Collaboration Project as a model for other district data projects.

The Holyoke Public Schools had been using Achievement Network (ANet) quarterly assessments to monitor the progress of its students in grades 2-8 against state standards since the 2012-2013 school year. In summer 2014, the district decided to discontinue the use of ANet, based on the expense involved in using ANet and on evidence that ANet was not a good fit for most of the elementary schools. One school (Kelly Elementary) decided to continue with ANet since staff had been making appropriate and effective use of the system.

While in the past the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment had been administered in addition to ANet and the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) to measure student progress during the year, district leaders said that they recognized the necessity that teachers have formative assessment data to make instructional decisions. They also said that they were aware of the need for more effective approaches to doing so. During the 2014-2015 school year the district embarked on the development, administration, and analysis of local formative assessments in ELA and mathematics in all but one of its elementary/middle schools (the exception is Kelly School, which continues to use ANet as noted above), and in science in all elementary schools.

At the time of the site visit, the district's first locally developed formative assessments had been administered and analyzed, and the second round was to be administered shortly. The reports generated for analysis of the first assessment results were comprehensive and useful at the district, school, and classroom levels. However, at the time of the site visit, the second administration of the district interim assessments had not taken place.

Quarterly assessments at Holyoke High School (HHS) were in various stages of development. At HHS, the science department had been administering common chapter, unit, midterm, and final tests for a number of years; at the time of the site visit the department was in the initial stages of aligning its curriculum to the draft 2016 science standards. The English and mathematics departments at HHS were in their second year of administering quarterly assessments, but substantial modifications were made in the ELA assessments between the first and second year.

The district grasps the powerful role data can play in the improvement of student achievement. However, at the time of the site visit, the district continued to need to grow and improve its formative assessment system, including increasing the frequency of assessment, in order to ensure that data does indeed play this powerful role.

Human Resources and Professional Development

Integral to Holyoke's Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) is a theory of action that posits that improving the professional practice of educators and educational leaders will result in substantially improved student learning outcomes. Several of the strategic components of this theory of action relate directly to the human resources and professional development standard and its indicators.

The first of these critical AIP components is classroom practice. The district has been implementing an educator evaluation system aligned with the state model. Under the direction of the superintendent, the district is employing the new supervisory model to focus systematically on improving classroom practice, as well as to enhance the skills and leadership capacity of school and district administrators. Interviews with teachers and administrators and a thorough review of evaluative documents and data confirmed that the district's effective use of educator evaluation is providing strong and appropriate support for its comprehensive school improvement initiatives.

The second relevant AIP component is the district's commitment of increased time for professional development (PD) for both teachers and administrators. The district is currently developing a comprehensive and cohesive PD program that focuses on providing expanded, sustained, and properly differentiated learning opportunities for all its educators. The district's "20 Hour" initiative focuses on the goal of providing all teachers with at least 20 hours of embedded professional learning time each month. This has been accomplished in a combination of ways, including additional early release PD days, increased and expanded common planning time, professional learning communities, and various team and faculty meetings. Additionally, the development of leadership capacity, another strategic objective in the district's AIP, is being advanced effectively through the creation of two key administrator support groups, the District Instructional Leadership Team and the Teaching and Learning Team, as well as through the creation of a new district leadership position, the director of leadership effectiveness, whose role is to coach principals in support of their continuous growth and improvement.

The district has developed systems and devoted resources to achieving its goals in this area, and progress has been made, particularly during the past 18 months. But the absence of meaningful involvement, formal representation, and active participation of teachers in the direction, design, and delivery of professional development at the district level threatens to slow progress and undermine the likelihood of continued success.

Student Support

As noted in the district overview, the student population in Holyoke is largely composed of high-needs students. From 2010 to 2014, the percentage of students from low-income families increased from 74.3 percent to 85.3 percent. In the 2014-2015 school year, students with disabilities make up 24.1 percent of enrollment, as compared with the state rate of 17.0 percent; English language learners (ELLs), 28.5 percent versus 7.9 percent statewide; and students whose first language is not English, 47.7 percent versus 18.5 percent statewide. In the 2014-2015 school year, 78.8 percent of the district's students are Hispanic and 16.3 percent are White, with African-American students making up 3.1 percent of students and Asian and Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic students making up the remaining 1.7 percent. At the high

school level, enrollment patterns by subgroup appear substantially different across the two schools. The student body at Dean Vocational Technical High School is 31.3 percent ELLs and 35.2 percent students with disabilities, while Holyoke High School is 14.1 percent ELLs and 14.3 percent students with disabilities.

The district has assembled programs, practices, structures, and staff, including community partners, to support students' academic and non-academic needs. There is a heightened awareness of the academic needs of ELLs and students with disabilities. Literacy learning for all students, but particularly for ELLs and students with disabilities, has been the focus of all district improvement planning, including school improvement plans, professional development, and the active work of partners in the district. A common process (Building Based Student Support Teams) is used throughout the district to provide support for struggling students. Supports include designated time and staff to provide interventions for students.

The high school offers GEAR UP and Upward Bound (college and career preparation programs), and the district recently deployed graduation coaches for students at risk of dropping out of school. Additionally, the Pathways to Success Program, initiated in early 2014, helps students who have already dropped out to fulfill graduation requirements.

In addition, there is a sharpened focus on family engagement, attendance, and school culture throughout the district. Approximately 24 community partners work in concert with one another and the district under the umbrella of the Holyoke Early Literacy Initiative (HELI). These partners align their programs with the needs of the district, focusing on literacy for ages 0 to 5, family engagement, instructional support, and attendance.

The district recognizes the needs of its students and is developing a system of both academic and non-academic support for them. It has seen small improvements in student indicators such as graduation, dropout, and suspension rates. Nonetheless, outcomes on most student indicators remain extremely low.

Financial and Asset Management

According to its community profile, the city of Holyoke at one time had more than 25 paper mills powered by water from the Connecticut River. Only one plant continues to manufacture paper, and other industrial buildings are reused for other purposes. Its population, according to Department of Revenue (DOR) data, was 40,249 in 2013; its per capita income in 2011 was \$14,603, compared with a state average of \$33,411, and its 2012 equalized valuation was also low, at \$54,141 compared with an average of \$155,402 for the state.

The district and the city face financial challenges. Administrators and city officials reported, and DOR data confirmed, that because property values have fallen, the city is taxing at nearly its levy ceiling, which is 2 ½ percent of total property valuation. Should property valuation fall further or annual tax increases reach the 2 ½ percent limit, the city will be unable to increase tax revenue at all under the

rules of Proposition 2 ½. Unavoidable annual cost increases such as salaries and benefits for city and district personnel would necessitate budget cuts every year.

From fiscal year 2012 to fiscal year 2015 the city has authorized appropriations for education very close to the minimum required amount of net school spending, varying from 0.3 percent below the requirement to 1.6 percent above for fiscal year 2012 to fiscal year 2015. If the city could no longer increase its tax levy, any increase in required net school spending from ESE would require cuts to the city side of the budget and to school budget lines not included in net school spending, such as capital spending on facilities.

The state's Chapter 70 education aid program provided the district with \$69.8 million in fiscal year 2015, 88 percent of the district's \$79.5 million net school spending requirement. State aid increased by only 0.2 percent (\$164K) relative to fiscal year 2014, primarily because of decreasing foundation enrollment, which includes all students resident in Holyoke attending district public schools, public charter schools, or other public school districts through the school choice program. Over the five years from fiscal years 2011 to 2015, foundation enrollment declined by 2 percent, although the foundation budget has increased by 7.6 percent over this period because of inflation factors. During this same period, tuitions paid by the district for charter school and school choice students increased from \$9 million to \$13 million. The city received charter school reimbursements of approximately \$2.3 million that partially offset the tuition expenditures, and these reimbursements, according to city officials, were passed on to the district. In the current year, charter school reimbursements are subject to 9C cuts. In addition to tuitions, the city directly pays for benefits and insurance, which is typical. In fiscal year 2015 the net amount remaining under direct management of the district was \$63.7 million, which was \$4 million to \$5 million less than the fiscal year 2014 amount, and substantial cuts were required to balance the budget.

For Holyoke the combination of declining foundation dollars and district enrollments puts great pressure on the district budget process. When the district prepared for the reduction in available funding for fiscal year 2015, the superintendent used a zero-based budget process to set priorities and make resources equitable. Many dollars were reallocated, including a reorganization of the central office administrative structure to align to the district's AIP.

Nevertheless, spending on in-district pupils (which includes city expenditures on benefits and insurance, and expenditures from federal and state grant funds) was \$16,881 per pupil in fiscal year 2014, compared to \$14,051 for the state.³ In addition, the city has received reimbursements from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for school renovations, and the large majority of its school budget is funded through the state's Chapter 70 program.

³ At the time that the report was written, state figures were preliminary and did not include all districts.

District Review Findings

Strengths

Leadership and Governance

1. The superintendent has taken steps to address low student achievement in the district. He has set forth a vision of high student achievement for all students and has established systems to align the district's efforts to raise student achievement.

A. The district Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP), required by the state, is constructed around a theory of action that places language development strategies at the core of instruction.

1. A review of the Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) results on the kindergarten readiness subtests for a sample of more than half the kindergarten students in the district showed that 68 percent were unable to accurately identify a minimum of 13 letters and their sounds and 52 percent were unable to correctly identify a minimum of 8 initial sounds. In addition, 58 percent did not exhibit a minimum of five early literacy behaviors that indicate reading readiness.

B. The district AIP contains five goals that overarch all aspects of the district's efforts to improve student achievement: leadership capacity; achievement of ELLs, students with disabilities and other subgroups; literacy; science, technology, engineering, and math education (STEM); and culture and climate. Included in the literacy and STEM goals are five best instructional practices (Holyoke's Best Practices) that the district has identified as critical to raising student achievement: text-based questions, student discourse, close reading, vocabulary development, and climate and culture.

1. Interviews and a document review showed that formative and summative personnel evaluations are aligned to the five key practices.

2. The professional development offerings for both teachers and administrators are aligned to the key instructional practices. Each school has the latitude to target those practices that promise to be most effective for its particular school populations. The AIP is cross-referenced in the professional development plan.

3. The district walkthrough protocol that serves as both a professional development tool and a supervisory mechanism is similarly aligned.

C. The district conducted a major reorganization of leadership positions for instruction and support services to support the AIP and to implement the district's theory of action.

1. The district reported that several district-level administrator positions have been eliminated or consolidated, and since July 2013 five of seven academic and student support director

- positions have been restructured and filled by new leaders (Student Services, ELA/Humanities, Early Learning, Elementary STEM, English Language Education [ELE])—only the directors of special education and secondary math positions have not turned over. Additionally, three new central office positions were added to further articulate the district’s vision: a director of leadership effectiveness, a director of talent and professional development, and an instructional data analyst. Also, the director of state and federal grants position was posted and filled with a new leader, and resources were consolidated to create a full service community district manager whose role includes coordinating the Holyoke Early Literacy Initiative (HELI) and leading/supporting school and district-based collaborations with community partners.
2. All existing coaching positions were eliminated, and seven district-based instructional leadership specialist positions (ILS) replaced coaching positions in the 2014-2015 school year. Six ILSs focus primarily on literacy; one supports science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Under joint supervision of principals and academic directors, the ILSs work with teachers to improve their practice, to support curriculum development, and to provide related professional development. Teachers and administrators reported that these positions have had a positive impact on instructional practice.
 3. Directors are supervised by and work collaboratively with the assistant superintendent to implement the district vision, and they are responsible for the support and joint supervision (with principals) of district ILSs.
- D.** The district has established a process to align its curriculum vertically and horizontally across the system. It is in the process of developing its own “interim”⁴ formative assessments in English language arts, mathematics, and science.
- E.** The district has strategically aligned its resources to support the vision.
1. All grants have been redesigned to support the structures. For example, Title I grant money is now used to fund the ILSs, who support the key foci of classroom instruction.
 2. The Holyoke Early Literacy Initiative (HELI) has been reworked to provide critical pre-school support. This includes new partnerships through which pre-school is being provided for the first time in three of the elementary schools in 2014-2015.
- F.** In response to the superintendent’s changes in the school system to raise student achievement, the school committee has reorganized itself to reflect a renewed commitment to the needs of students.
1. Rather than the usual committees of policy, budget, facilities, and curriculum, the Holyoke School Committee has established four permanent committees: Leadership, Accountability and Measurement; Communications and Policies; Resources and Capacity Building; and

⁴ The district uses the term interim assessment rather than formative assessment.

Joint School Committee/City Council. In this way the school committee sends a message to the community and school staff that student achievement is its core mission.

2. The school committee has supported the superintendent's reorganization and vision through several votes to accept budget proposals and through support of an attempt to reopen a preschool program in a building previously turned over to the city. In this instance, the city council and the school committee were unable to come to agreement and the building was not returned to the school committee.

Impact: The direction set by the superintendent is clear, and the district has leveraged resources and obtained stakeholder commitment to improving student achievement. This collaboration and level of commitment is a necessary first step to improving Holyoke Public Schools.

Curriculum and Instruction

2. **During the past 18 months, the Holyoke school district has initiated a system for the ongoing development of curriculum and aligned support structures. This system includes a reorganization of leadership, dedicated time for curriculum alignment to current state frameworks, districtwide time for teacher collaboration, and targeted professional development.**

- A. A restructuring of the central office allowed for the designation of key instructional leadership positions for the oversight and support of curricular and instructional initiatives. See the Leadership and Governance Strength finding above.
- B. The district has dedicated time for curriculum development, for vertical and horizontal articulation, and for development and revision of instructional materials.
 1. The superintendent has identified curriculum development as a district priority. Summer curriculum teams were established in August 2013, and directors have facilitated teacher teams in ELA, mathematics, and science. Extensive K-12 work has been completed to date and teams are expected to continue this work during the summer of 2015.
 2. Structures are in place for directors to meet regularly with principals, ILSs, and teachers to maintain the focus on district priorities, review district and school data, and further identify needs in the areas of curriculum, best practice, and related professional development.
 3. Common planning time has been built into all teachers' schedules for the 2014-2015 school year; this time is available in part for curriculum work. Elementary teachers meet weekly, and grade 6-8 teachers have daily common planning time.

Impact: The district has established structures and supports to develop an aligned and documented curriculum. By doing so it has ensured that all students have access to appropriate grade-level curricula.

3. The district has made substantial progress in the development of a mathematics curriculum aligned with the state 2011 *Mathematics Curriculum Framework*.

- A.** A review of documents indicates that the K-12 alignment of mathematics curricula to the 2011 state framework is complete and comprehensive with the exception of one high school course.
1. Documents are comprehensive and incorporate scope and sequences; pacing guides; student objectives; assessments; chapter/unit maps; resources including ESE Model Curriculum Units; alignment with PARCC major, supporting, and culminating standards; and vocabulary and instructional strategies for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.
 2. Core mathematics courses at the high school—Algebra 1, Algebra 1 (two year course), Algebra 1 Honors, Algebra 2, Algebra 2 Honors, Geometry, and Geometry Honors—are aligned with the 2011 *Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Framework*. The alignment of the pre-calculus course is in progress.
 3. Primary mathematics instructional materials have been purchased.

Impact: This fully developed mathematics curriculum ensures that all students in the district have access to a comprehensive curriculum.

Human Resources and Professional Development

4. The district has been implementing an educator evaluation system that is aligned with the state model and is using it to focus on systematically improving classroom practice, thereby advancing the academic goals articulated in the Accelerated Improvement Plan. It has implemented many of the key elements of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework.

- A.** In his opening remarks to the review team, the superintendent indicated that historically, staff evaluations have been little more than professional “love letters,” but that his administration has established significantly increased performance expectations. He explained that the new educator evaluation system is being used to systematically advance the district’s strategic objectives to improve classroom practice and target instruction towards English language learners, students with disabilities, and other student subgroups. Interviews with teachers and administrators, as well as a thorough review of evaluative documents and data, confirmed the accuracy of the superintendent’s statements.
1. Team members reviewed the personnel folders of 30 faculty members selected randomly from across the district, as well as those of all school principals and district administrators. Overall, evaluative documentation (educator plans, goals, formative and summative assessments) was both timely and complete. Evaluations were, in general, descriptive, informative, evidence based and, particularly in the case of administrators, contained

specific comments and recommendations intended to improve performance and contribute to overall professional growth.

2. Administrators said that carefully structured, districtwide “Focus Learning Walks” are conducted quarterly to monitor and calibrate the implementation of well-defined best teaching practices across the district’s classrooms. Data from the learning walks are subsequently compiled, analyzed, and disseminated in benchmark reports that present and document observed strengths, areas for growth, trends, and patterns. Some modest progress in implementation of the district best practices for instruction has taken place between this school year’s first and second focus learning walks.
- B.** The superintendent has demonstrated his support for the new educator evaluation system, as well as his expectation that it serve as an essential vehicle to advance the strategic goals contained in the district’s Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP).
1. For the 2013-2014 school year, the superintendent and assistant superintendent wrote summary evaluations of each of the district’s principals and central office administrators. These evaluations corresponded with the requirements articulated in the state educator evaluation regulations and included detailed, evidence-based commendations, and clear and specific recommendations.
 2. Administrators indicated that the superintendent monitors their implementation of the new evaluation system to ensure its fidelity and effectiveness. They said that he regularly communicates his expectation that all of the system’s component steps, stages, and timelines are met. A district leader reported that the assistant superintendent also monitors the implementation of the educator evaluation system.
 3. Interviewees told the team that the district has created new structures and systems specifically designed to develop leadership capacity and support improved leadership practices at both school and district levels. These include the District Instructional Leadership Team (DILT) and the creation of two new district positions, the director of leadership effectiveness and the director of talent and professional development. Principals reported that these supports serve as a valuable mechanism for continuous improvements in their leadership skills and effectiveness and that educator evaluation has been an important focus of their work.

Impact: The district’s efforts to adopt and implement an evaluation system aligned to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework reflect its commitment to comprehensive and systematic school improvement. Significantly increased attention and resources have been devoted to ensure that both teachers and administrators prioritize and promote student academic achievement. If the district can adhere to regulatory timelines and expectations as additional components of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework are introduced, continued growth and systematic improvement will likely result.

5. The district is creating a comprehensive and cohesive professional development program that directly focuses on providing expanded and sustained learning opportunities for both teachers and administrators, is systematically aligned and supportive of the district's Accelerated Improvement Plan, and incorporates the characteristics of ESE's Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development.

A. The district has replaced its prior professional development (PD) system; it was described in interviews as site based, largely disconnected, uncoordinated, and not aligned with the district's Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP). Replacing that system is one that has centralized and effective leadership, is carefully planned and coordinated, is continuously evaluated for effectiveness, promotes a culture of high professional expectations, and is directly aligned with and supportive of specific district priorities and initiatives.

1. A review of the district's PD plan showed considerable evidence of the district's commitment to revitalizing its PD programming, as well as to subsequently using it as a central vehicle to advance and properly support the implementation of the goals and objectives articulated in the Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP). This includes: the creation this year of a new position, the director of talent and professional development to lead the district's PD program; the detailed and systematic alignment of all PD programs, services, and supports with the AIP's strategic objectives; and the district's commitment to substantially increasing scheduled time devoted to focused, structured learning opportunities among the district's educators and administrators.
 - a. This year the district has implemented the "20 Hours" initiative, the goal of which is to provide all educators with at least 20 hours of embedded professional learning time each month to support and accelerate professional growth. Interviewees said that this is being accomplished in a combination of ways, including realigning school master schedules to create regularly scheduled common planning time for all staff, and creating and restructuring key leadership positions (Early Literacy, ELA/Humanities, Elementary STEM, Secondary Math, ESL) so that professional learning and improved teacher practice are now a central function of these roles.
2. Interviewees identified a wide array of district structures and supports dedicated to focused and coordinated improvement activities and learning opportunities for teachers. These include: Instructional Learning Teams (ILTs) in which school and teacher leaders in each school meet regularly; grade level teams; shared learning walks; grade level and vertical curriculum teams; and professional learning communities (PLCs).
3. Administrators reported creating an additional seven hours of PD per month for teachers this year compared to last and a projected doubling of PD time over the course of this school year, from 24 to 48 hours. Teachers and administrators stated that all this available time is strategically aligned to support district priorities related to teaching and learning. This complete alignment of professional development was not previously in place.

4. Administrators said that a new digital platform, My Learning Plan (MLP), had been introduced this year. MLP is a comprehensive, online, individualized PD management and evaluation system that when fully operational will provide teachers and the district with an efficient way to plan, track, record, and evaluate all forms of PD programs and services
5. District leaders indicated that work is currently underway to develop a new and greatly strengthened and expanded educator induction program for the district. The program is being piloted this year; interviews and a document review indicated that, when the program is fully implemented in 2015-2016 it will provide a comprehensive range of appropriate mentoring supports and services for teachers throughout their first three years of service in the district.
6. In direct response to strategic objective #1 in the AIP (Development of Leadership Capacity), focused efforts are currently underway to promote improved leadership at both the school and district levels. Those cited in interviews as most effective include: the District Instructional Leadership Team (DILT), in which district and school leaders meet monthly for a full day to engage in structured reflection and planning activities; the Teaching and Learning Team, in which the assistant superintendent meets bi-weekly with all academic directors to develop plans to improve curriculum, instruction, and related professional learning activities; and the creation of two new key district leadership positions, the director of leadership effectiveness, who coaches principals to support their continuous growth and improvement as school leaders, and the director of talent and professional development, who supports principals and directors in the development and improvement of PD programs and services.

Impact: The district's commitment to developing a comprehensive PD program with the capacity to effectively support all educators as well as to systematically advance core district priorities and initiatives has been unequivocal, and progress has been impressive. Substantial resources are being invested to create PD programs and supports designed to expand the knowledge, practices, and overall competencies of both teachers and administrators.

Student Support

6. **The district has a common process and a range of programs, practices, and designated staff to support struggling students. The district is beginning to see improvements in suspensions, attendance, and graduation rates.**
 - A. All district schools have processes in place to identify and provide interventions for students not performing at expected levels.
 1. Review team members were told in multiple interviews, and documents confirmed, that each school has a Building Based Student Support Team (BBST) that meets as frequently as

weekly to discuss students who are not performing at expected grade levels and to develop intervention plans for them. A workbook with common district forms guides teachers in the best use of BBST.

2. The Peck, Lawrence, and Kelly schools have a pre-BBST process called Internal Review Teams (IRTs). IRTs meet weekly and serve as an earlier identification process that links student needs to available outside community partner services.
- B.** The district has a range of programs, structures, and staff to support students' academic needs.
1. Documents and an interview conducted with partners confirmed that the Holyoke Early Literacy Initiative (HELI), a comprehensive, city-wide initiative, is composed of 24 community partners all coordinating programming and data collection efforts to support the district's focus on literacy achievement in grade 3. HELI convened four workgroups to focus its partners' services: kindergarten readiness, key instructional strategies, family engagement, and attending for literacy (focus on attendance). Each workgroup meets monthly with a district administrator. The district has a designated HELI coordinator who also serves as the district full service community director.
 2. Documents provided indicated that each elementary school has one Tiered Support Specialist (TSS) who works with the principal and other leaders to design and support the school's intervention model. The model may include the deployment of teachers and tutors during intervention blocks. Tutors, some of whom are retired teachers, provide interventions including enrichment K-8 in mathematics and literacy.
 3. Documents and classroom observations confirmed that most elementary schools have integrated designated intervention blocks into their master schedule. Review team members observed an intervention block at the Peck school; in addition, the White School master schedule included intervention and enrichment blocks. Documents also described intervention blocks at Donahue, Lawrence, McMahon, and Sullivan. These blocks are used to provide students with targeted interventions based on their needs. Some students also receive their special education services or ELL services during intervention blocks.
 4. The district conducts an after-school program called Connections in seven schools, including Dean Vocational Technical High School. Connections, serving students in grades 2 through 12, begins at 2:50 pm and ends at 5:50 pm. Approximately one hour is devoted to academic support including homework help and opportunities for teachers and tutors to work with individual students based on their needs. The Connections Director is one of the HELI partners.
 5. Review team members were provided with a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) that includes suggested accommodations for elementary, middle, and high school classrooms including a section of suggested accommodations for English language learners (ELLs). The DCAP also lists various staff in the district and their role in supporting or

providing interventions in regular education classrooms. Interviewees reported and documents confirmed that the back portion of the DCAP is an accountability sheet where teachers list accommodations tried in the classroom before students were referred to BBST

6. Interviewees reported that in addition to intervention blocks, tutors, and tiered support specialists, the district has created Response to Intervention (RTI) flow charts and toolboxes for related services in each elementary school. Teachers with concerns related to speech and language, physical therapy, or occupational therapy are directed to the toolbox for strategies to try in the classroom before they refer students to BBST. Interviewees reported that the toolbox was recently modified to include tools for teaching ELLs.
7. A document review and interviews showed that academic supports are available in Holyoke High School and Dean Vocational Technical High School.
 - a. Holyoke High School teachers hold after-school office hours to support students. Office-hour support is available in a different content area each day of the week. Interviewees reported that an announcement is made every morning informing students which content area is holding office hours that day.
 - b. GEAR UP and Upward Bound offer academic tutoring, SAT preparation, mentoring, and support with college applications and financial aid applications. GEAR Up serves approximately 250 students at Holyoke High School, while Upward Bound serves approximately 50 students.
 - c. A document review showed that the high school offers MCAS tutoring in ELA, math and science.
 - d. Interviewees reported and documents confirmed that graduation coaches work with students at risk of dropping out of school, with a special focus on English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities to prepare them to be college- and career-ready. Each of the 18 coaches has a caseload of 10 to 12 students from Holyoke High School and Dean Vocational Technical High School.
 - e. The Pathways to Success Program, which started in March 2014, works with students who have dropped out of school to help them complete graduation requirements through credit recovery. Currently 45 students are enrolled in the program, and five have graduated.
 - f. Documents provided indicated that Dean Vocational Technical High School is using Plato and Apex software to work on credit recovery for 11th and 12th grade students.
- C. The district has programs and staff to support students' non-academic needs, and the district is seeing early positive results.

1. Documents provided indicated that the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model is implemented in each elementary school. The Holyoke Newsletter Fall 2014 issue reported that Peck and Lawrence had just begun the program and Donahue was in its second year. Review team members saw evidence in classrooms of active use of PBIS.
2. Documents provided showed that there are advisories in both high schools with curriculum designed by the Restorative Justice Committee (in its second year), with the goal of building relationships and improving culture and community.
3. The district has student support specialists in each elementary school who staff classrooms that serve as an alternative space for students who may need to re-group or calm down before going back to class. This program is designed to meet students' academic and non-academic needs for short periods of time.
4. A document review and interviews showed that a variety of other supports are available for student non-academic needs, including counselors, attendance assistants, family liaisons, and a McKinney-Vento homeless coordinator. The McKinney-Vento coordinator links homeless families to resources for transportation, meals, and other needed services.
5. The district is beginning to see improvements in the number of discipline referrals, and in suspension, attendance, and graduation rates.
 - a. According to ESE data, the Holyoke Public Schools reported 162 fewer students disciplined in 2014 than in 2013 (from 1,443 in 2012-2013 to 1,281 in 2013-2014). During the same period the out-of-school suspension rate dropped slightly (1.5 percentage points), from 21.5 percent in 2012-2013 to 20.0 percent in 2013-2014 and the in-school suspension rate showed a 1.1 percentage point drop, from 3.6 in 2012-2013 to 2.5 in 2013-2014.
 - b. Holyoke attendance rates showed a slight increase between 2013 and 2014, from 90.5 to 91.4 percent. The most recent posting of Massachusetts grade 9-12 dropout rates showed a 2.7 percentage point improvement in these rates in Holyoke, from 9.1 in 2012-2013 to 6.4 in 2013-2014.
 - c. According to ESE data, the four-year cohort graduation rate improved from 49.5 percent in 2011 to 60.2 percent in 2014. The five-year cohort graduation rate improved from 56.1 percent in 2010 to 58.2 percent in 2013.

Impact: Having a common process in place throughout the district to identify struggling students and an array of programs, practices, community partners, and designated staff to meet students' academic and non-academic needs, the district has already begun to realize small improvements in attendance and suspension rates and a decrease in dropout rates.

Financial and Asset Management

7. In the face of a projected \$4 million to \$5 million deficit for fiscal year 2015, the superintendent and the district reallocated resources to implement the district's theory of action, including a major reorganization of the leadership structure for curriculum and instruction. The district continues to allocate resources and grants strategically for its priorities.

- A.** The district reallocated staffing and operations for fiscal year 2015 to reduce the budget gap.
 - 1. Administrators told the team that the superintendent used a zero-based budget process to address the budget gap. The leadership team met several times, and principals and administrators presented their school and program needs; all their requests were discussed from the standpoint of need, equity, and the quality of instruction, in line with the district's theory of action.
 - 2. The reorganization of curriculum and instruction leadership positions netted an estimated \$200,000 in reductions for fiscal year 2015.
 - 3. Other staffing reallocations resulted in savings of \$2.2 million at the elementary schools and \$854,000 at the high schools. Administrators reported that there were staffing reductions to implement equitable class sizes and special education caseloads across the district, the use of tutors instead of reading specialists, consolidation of ELL positions, elimination of elementary librarian positions, and an equitable distribution of custodians.
 - 4. The reallocations included a major reorganization of leadership positions for instruction and support services to support the AIP and to implement the district's theory of action. See the Leadership and Governance Strength finding above.
- B.** By the end of the budget process in June, the district estimated it could carry over \$1.7 million in federal grant funds and spend \$450,000 from school choice tuitions (which can be used in multiple years) in fiscal year 2015 to close the budget gap. While reducing the fiscal year 2015 budget gap, these are not sustainable sources of funds.
 - 1. Carryover funds of \$3.8 million, resulting from hiring and operations freezes and other unexpended school funds, covered a budget gap in fiscal year 2014 as well. Because unexpended funds were available, city officials perceived that there was little need for additional funding, which complicates long-term budget planning discussions.
- C.** The district's allocation of other resources strategically supports the priorities of its theory of action.
 - 1. School and city officials described their commitment to early literacy (including dual language) programs for Holyoke children.

- a. The district and the city have successfully sought grants and other outside funding for early literacy programs, including a share of a \$60 million federal Preschool Development Grant to five Massachusetts communities, the United Way, a Gateway Cities Innovation Award, and an EEC Early Literacy grant for the Holyoke Early Literacy Initiative (HELI).
2. Title I and other entitlement grant funds have been reallocated to support district priorities, such as instructional leadership specialists, reading tutors, and after-school programs.
3. Administrators stressed that the district now aggressively pursues grants that align with its priorities and the AIP. In addition to early literacy, grant applications have been written for college and career readiness, the Pathways program for dropouts, and credit recovery funding. Administrators described several competitive and private grants awarded already this year, and reported that they are looking for funding for an alternative education program.
4. Administrators and town officials reported on partnerships with several other community agencies on early childhood, after school, and other priority programs. Partners include the city library, the Parks and Recreation Department, HeadStart, Strategies for Children, the United Way, the YMCA, fire and police departments, the Department for Children and Families (DCF), juvenile court, and the district attorney's office.

Impact: The appropriate allocation of district funding and resources is critical to the success of district vision and improvement planning. This is particularly important when addressing a deficit, which may require cuts to educational programs and services. By reallocating resources strategically the district is implementing its theory of action effectively. Furthermore, the reallocations themselves send a strong message throughout the district and community about the district's strategic direction.

8. The district has managed its capital needs effectively, making use of MSBA support and bonding by the city for renovations of buildings and outside resources for technology. Maintenance and custodial services are also managed effectively.

A. The district has a five-year capital plan.

1. The plan includes vehicles, electricity and lighting upgrades, boiler and HVAC replacements, window replacements, roofs, fire alarm and security upgrades, and technology upgrades.

An interview with administrators and a review of school committee minutes showed that the district is pursuing MSBA funding for renovations at the Kelly, White, and Morgan schools, and with Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) support it has completed major renovations at Holyoke High School and a science and computer lab project at Dean Technical High School.

2. City officials reported that the city has been able to use its bonding capacity to cover its share of school renovations without the need for a debt exclusion override.

3. The city's parks department is responsible for fields and playgrounds; for example, it renovated a track and field and replaced the turf at the football field at city expense.
- B.** An interview with administrators and a review of school committee minutes showed that the district is also pursuing MSBA funding for a new school building to replace the Lawrence School building.
- C.** The district is exploring other spaces in the city to reduce costs for housing an alternative program and administration offices.
1. Administrators said and a review of school committee minutes indicated that the district has requested that the city return the empty Lynch School to free up space for those and other purposes.
 2. The relocation of school administration offices would save approximately \$333,000 on the current lease.
- E.** The district has systems to maintain and clean its buildings equitably.
1. Administrators reported that they use an online system to request, monitor, prioritize, and record building maintenance requests. The same system is used for technology maintenance.
 2. During the development of the fiscal year 2015 budget, the CASBO formula was used to assign custodial services equitably, based on building use, square footage, and other considerations.

Impact: Renovations, upgrades, maintenance, and cleaning have kept school buildings in good condition for teaching and learning. The effective use of outside funding, city resources, and planning have made these improvements possible at limited expense, thus keeping funds available for educational programs.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

It is important to note that district review reports prioritize identifying challenges and areas for growth in order to promote a cycle of continuous improvement; the report deliberately describes the district's challenges and concerns in greater detail than the strengths identified during the review.

Leadership and Governance

9. Although the central office has begun the process of establishing a vision and direction for the school system, its impact has not been observed in student data.

- A. Student achievement and growth in the Holyoke Public Schools are among the lowest in the state overall and for student subgroups. The highest performing school in the district is at the 21st percentile of its grade span, and more than half of schools with available data are in the bottom 10 percent of schools statewide. From 2011 to 2014, student academic achievement and growth declined in nearly every grade and subject.
- B. The 2013-2014 student out-of-school suspension rate, at 20.0 percent per year, was more than five times higher than the state average of 3.9 percent. The average student in the district was absent 13.8 days in the 2013-2014 school year, as compared with a state average of 8.7 days.
- C. Graduation rates and dropout rates at both high schools are also extremely low. In 2014 the four-year cohort graduation rate in Holyoke was 60.2 percent: 68.4 percent at Holyoke High School and 41.5 percent at Dean Vocational Technical High School. The overall annual dropout rate was 6.4 percent: 5.0 percent at Holyoke High School and 10.2 percent at Dean Vocational Technical.
- D. Several of these indicators improved from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014. For instance, the dropout rate declined from 9.0 percent to 6.4 percent, and the out-of-school suspension rate declined from 21.5 percent to 20.0 percent. The four-year cohort graduation rate increased from 53.8 percent in 2012-2013 to 60.2 percent in 2013-2014. Nonetheless, Holyoke ranks at or near the bottom of the state on nearly every academic and non-academic indicator.

10. Progress in advancing district initiatives has been hindered by an absence of constructive participation by the Holyoke Teachers' Association.

- A. School principals and central office administrators identified the relationship between the district and the Holyoke Teachers' Association as a barrier to success. Union leaders said that teachers feel they are being blamed by the administration for the district's low performance.
- B. Administrators indicated that a strained relationship with the Holyoke Teachers' Association (HTA) has had a negative impact on the district's attempts to implement educator evaluation components. For example, according to district leaders, a joint Labor-Management Team met regularly during summer 2013 and spring 2014 to discuss revisions to the district's version of the evaluation system, and came to a tentative agreement in June 2014. However, under new

leadership the HTA rejected the revisions in the fall of 2014. Discussion of revisions to the evaluation system has since been subsumed into current full contract bargaining, and the joint Labor-Management Team is not meeting at this time.

- C. Teachers indicated that filing grievances has become the means often used to “clarify misunderstandings.”

Impact: Without the active participation of all educators and district leaders in advancing the district’s core goals, priorities, and initiatives, progress will be slowed and success threatened.

Curriculum and Instruction

11. While the district has achieved extensive curriculum alignment with the 2011 *Massachusetts ELA and Mathematics Curriculum Frameworks*, the district’s K-12 curriculum is not complete. All ELA and ELL curriculum documents are not in place, and science curriculum revision is in progress.

- A. The development of a K-12 ELL curriculum aligned with World-Class Instructional Design and Development (WIDA) English Language Development (ELD) standards is incomplete and varies by level.
 - 1. A review of documents identified comprehensive ELL curriculum maps for K-5. Documents include a scope and sequence, language, reading, writing, listening, and speaking standards by unit with links to unit guides and unit activities. The team did not find evidence of documented maps for grades 6-12. However, all district 6-12 mathematics, science, and ELA curriculum documents have embedded in them a content-specific model performance indicator (MPI) for teachers to refer to when developing language objectives and outcomes.
 - 2. The district website identified extensive resources for K-12 teachers of English language learners (ELLs) including WIDA standards, ELL instructional strategies for reading and writing, tools for lesson planning, guided reading instruction with ELLs, and grammar checklists.
 - 3. The district is implementing a K-12 ELD Program using Reach for K-5, Inside for grades 6-8, and Edge for grades 9-12. These are aligned with WIDA and the Common Core standards.
- B. The development and alignment of a K-12 ELA curriculum is not yet complete.
 - 1. Documents in place include pacing guides; daily instructional focus standards; student objectives; assessments; vocabulary; instructional strategies and expectations; a scope and sequence for general instruction, grammar, writing, and word study; and ESE model curriculum units.

2. A review of documents as well as interviews with teachers and administrators corroborated that Holyoke's Best Practices, namely student discourse, vocabulary, text-based questions, and close reading, are embedded in document activities, resources, and strategies.
 3. However, some curriculum is currently under development in K-3 and 5-8, replacing America's Choice units and curriculum maps. The district reported that it expected full alignment to be completed this summer and implemented in the 2015-2016 school year.
 4. The district has purchased several programs to support literacy instruction in grades 1-8: Words Their Way (K-5), Simple Solutions Grammar (K-8), 6+1 Traits of Writing (K-8), and Handwriting: Writing without Tears (K-3).
- D.** K-12 science documents are currently aligned with the 2006 *Massachusetts Science and Technology & Engineering (STE) Framework*, and work is just beginning to align the science curriculum with the draft 2016 Massachusetts STE curriculum Framework.

Impact: Without complete development and alignment of the English language arts and English language development curricula, the district does not have a fully articulated continuum of teaching and learning expectations for all students.

12. The district has articulated a research-based instructional model and launched districtwide professional development focused on five specific instructional practices. However, the practices are in their initial stages of implementation and are not embedded in instruction at the classroom level.

- A.** The district has established a model for effective instructional practice, and educators across all levels share a common recognition of these district focus practices. However, classroom observations indicated that implementation of both those focus practices and of a broader array of effective instructional strategies is inconsistent districtwide.
1. Administrators identified a district instructional model aligned with ESE's *Characteristics of Standards-based Teaching and Learning: Continuum of Practice*, namely the Holyoke Public Schools Educator Observation Form.
 2. Central office administrators and principals stated that Holyoke's Best Practices (climate and culture, student discourse, vocabulary, text-based questions, and close reading) were "unpacked" from the Educator Observation Form and targeted as priority objectives based on a review of district student achievement. The district's Accelerated Improvement Plan translated these objectives into actionable strategic objectives targeting English language learners and students with disabilities.
 3. Across all levels, teachers and administrators articulated a common message about Holyoke's Best Practices.

B. Administrators and teachers said that effective implementation of an instructional strategy requires that teachers understand the strategy in some depth and that teachers' depth of knowledge about these strategies varies.

1. District administrators agreed that implementation of the district vision for improvement in teaching and learning is in its initial stages and that teachers will require additional supports to implement this vision.
2. Elementary teachers told the review team that additional professional development was needed so they can more effectively differentiate instruction.
3. Classroom observation data further documented this need at all levels. Teachers were observed clearly and consistently differentiating content to better meet their students' needs in 41 percent of elementary, in 39 percent of middle, and in 15 percent of visited high school classrooms. See characteristic #10 in Appendix C.
4. Teachers also stated that class size, the need for instructional resources including technology, and previously limited time for collaboration have had an impact on their ability to effectively implement district best practices. Classroom observation data reflected the limited use of technology in the classrooms and the limited availability of resources to meet students' diverse learning needs. See characteristics #16 and #22 in Appendix C.

Impact: An essential element of effective instruction is teachers' understanding of effective instructional practices. When teachers move beyond awareness to a deeper understanding of high-priority instructional strategies and have multiple instructional resources available to them, they will more consistently deliver high quality instruction and effectively meet their students' diverse learning needs.

13. The quality of instruction in observed classrooms was inconsistent and did not demonstrate mastery implementation of district instructional expectations.

The team observed 113 classes throughout the district: 26 at the 2 high schools, 31 at the middle school level (6-8), and 56 at the elementary level (K-5). The team observed 55 ELA classes, 32 mathematics classes, and 26 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were 2 special education classes, 2 ELL classes, and 1 career/technical education class. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE's instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

A. Classroom observations suggest that key instructional strategies such as the statement of clear objectives, the use of appropriate instructional materials, and the implementation of a range of strategies to meet diverse student needs are not embedded in classroom practice.

1. In 35 percent of all classrooms, observers noted clear and consistent evidence of the use of appropriate modifications for English language learners and students with disabilities including explicit language objectives, direct instruction in vocabulary, presentation of content at multiple levels of complexity, and differentiating lesson content, process and/or

products. Observers found clear and consistent evidence of this characteristic in 41 percent of elementary, in 39 percent of middle, and in 15 percent of high school classrooms.

- a. Many observed lessons were whole class with little differentiation of content, process or product, and they were generally teacher-directed activities with limited student engagement (paper/pencil activities, lecture, teacher-directed instruction, and low levels of interactive learning).
 - b. Examples of modifications observed included use of pictures to recall words, differentiation of student product in reading and vocabulary study, scaffolding of questions to elicit responses from a struggling student, word banks, sentence stems for completion of class notes, use of graphic organizers to assist with thesis development, and concept charts.
 2. Clear and consistent evidence of lessons involving rigor and high expectations was noted in only 50 percent of observed high school classrooms and 48 percent of middle and elementary classrooms.
 - a. Observers saw clear and consistent evidence that students were engaged in challenging academic tasks in only 50 percent of the elementary, 55 percent of the middle, and 31 percent of the high school classes. For example, in some observed classrooms students answered questions or completed worksheets, then waited for the next activity or opportunity to respond.
 - b. Conversely, some lessons engaged all students, were relevant and interconnected, and appropriately student centered. For example, in one classroom pairs of students interviewed each other then wrote about the students whom they interviewed; students in another classroom listened to a documentary about Martin Luther King followed by a deep discussion to derive meaning from King's speech.
 3. Teachers clearly and consistently communicated clear learning objectives aligned to the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in 71 percent of all observed classrooms. Review team members observed posted content and language objectives and agendas in 81 percent of middle school classrooms, in 73 percent of elementary classrooms, and in 54 percent of high school classrooms.
- B.** Instructional practices that promote higher order thinking, engage students in discourse about content and ideas, or provide opportunities for students to connect to prior knowledge, real world experiences or application of that knowledge to other subjects were infrequently observed and inconsistent across grade levels.
1. Across the district in observed classes, 34 percent of teachers clearly and consistently provided multiple opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking skills such as the use of inquiry, exploration, application, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of

knowledge of concept. 45 percent of middle school lessons, 25 percent of elementary, and 23 percent of high school reflected this practice.

- a. Students clearly and consistently inquired, explored, applied, analyzed, synthesized and/or evaluated knowledge or concepts in 34 percent of classrooms observed districtwide. The highest incidence of this characteristic was noted at the middle level (in 45 percent of classes); a lower incidence was found at the other levels (in 36 percent and in 15 percent in elementary and high school classrooms, respectively).
 - b. Students clearly and consistently articulated their thinking verbally or in writing in 41 percent of observed classrooms across the district. This practice was observed in 45 percent of elementary, in 42 percent of middle, and in 31 percent of high school classrooms.
 - c. Observations of Holyoke's Best Practices included student discourse to determine best answers using evidence from text, science discussions that referenced real life experiences and past learning, discussions on physical characteristics and dominance, and verbal translations of math word phrases into algebraic expressions.
2. Teacher use of effective questioning techniques to promote thoughtful student responses and understandings was clearly and consistently evident in 58 percent of middle level classes, 42 percent of the high school classrooms, and 39 percent of elementary level classes.
- a. Students clearly and consistently elaborated about content and ideas when responding to questions in 26 percent of observed classrooms; 35 percent of middle school, 23 percent of elementary, and 19 percent of high school classrooms showed evidence of this characteristic.
 - b. In the classrooms referenced above, where the characteristic was observed, teachers asked students to: pantomime vocabulary words while others explained their word choice (delta, silt, cataract, elevation, physical features), explain the meaning of incomplete dominance, determine if $p/4$ is the same or different from $4/p$, and discuss similarities and differences in the challenges presented to characters in a story.
- C. In observed classrooms, instructional practices indicating a positive learning environment, one reflective of the Holyoke's best practice about climate and culture, were inconsistent across grade levels.
1. Interactions between teachers and students and among students were clearly and consistently positive and respectful in 90 percent of all classrooms. Behavior standards were clearly and consistently communicated and managed in 85 percent of classrooms, and a positive learning environment that provided all students with access to learning activities was clearly and consistently observed in 81 percent of classrooms.

2. Review team members noted that 54 percent of observed high school classrooms clearly and consistently employed routines that promoted transitions with minimal loss of instructional time, compared with 84 percent and 81 percent of the elementary and middle school classes, respectively.
3. The availability of multiple resources to meet all students' diverse learning needs (#5) was clearly and consistently observed in 38 percent of all observed classrooms, in 54 percent of elementary, in 35 percent of middle, and in 8 percent of high school classrooms.
 - a. In 10 percent of observed classrooms, students clearly and consistently used technology as a tool for learning and/or understanding.

Impact: Observations of characteristics of standards-based teaching in Holyoke classrooms indicated that many students are not receiving the rigorous classroom instruction that promotes higher-order thinking skills and provides students with opportunities to elaborate on their own thinking.

Assessment

14. At the time of the review, the district was expanding its collection and use of data, but it did not have in place a complete system of formative assessments. Work was underway to develop such a system, but completion was several months away.

- A. Achievement Network (ANet) assessments had been administered four times a year and served as formative assessments.
 1. All but one of the K-8 schools discontinued the use of ANet assessments in summer 2014.
- B. Other assessments at these grade levels are administered less frequently, three times a year or fewer, and as such do not provide teachers with sufficient periodic evidence concerning their students' progress.
 1. The Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), including some of its subtests, is administered K-3 two or three times a year, depending on grade level.
 2. Interviewees said that Dean Vocational Technical High School "is beginning to develop assessments" and has "no current expertise in assessment development."
- C. Formative assessments that take place 4 to 8 times a year and guide teachers' instructional decisions are in place in some content areas and at some levels.
 1. Kelly (K-8) continues to administer ANet assessments four times a year in grades 2-8 in ELA and mathematics.

2. Holyoke High School (HHS) administers common quarterly assessments in ELA and mathematics.
 - a. HHS ELA quarterly assessments are in place for the second year, but were substantially revised after the first year. As a result, comparisons of student achievement between the first and second years are not useful.
 3. The science department at Holyoke High School has for several years administered common chapter tests, midterms, and finals in biology, chemistry, and physics followed by teachers' analysis of the results.
- D.** In recognition of the need for systematic collection, dissemination, and analysis of formative assessment data to monitor student progress, the district is developing and administering a system of "interim"⁵ assessments in ELA grades 2-8, in mathematics grades 3-8, and in science grades 4-8 during the 2014-2015 school year. These district assessments will take place three times a year, and the MCAS will serve as the summative assessment. Items on the interim assessments are constructed to measure students' proficiency on state standards.
1. Using the Gravic Office OMR software package, the district this year collected the K-8 results for the first interim assessments in ELA, mathematics, and science.
 2. Using the same software, the district generated a comprehensive set of reports on the first interim assessments for analysis at the district, school, and classroom levels.
 - a. The district provided staff with training on analyzing the interim report data.
 - b. District office administrators and principals received the complete set of reports and training during a District Instructional Leadership Team (DILT) meeting.
 - c. Teachers received selected classroom level reports and training on their analysis and use during a full day of professional development.
 - d. School Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) and Instructional Learning Specialists (ILSs) provided teachers with further training on the use of this data in the design of classroom instruction.
 3. At the time of the onsite visit, the first interim assessments had been administered and analyzed, and the second interim assessments were scheduled for administration in the immediate future.
 - a. With the administration of interim assessment 2, administrators will have data on student progress by comparing results from interim assessment 1 and interim assessment 2.

⁵ The district uses the term interim assessment rather than formative assessment.

- b. The results from the 2014-2015 administration of interim assessments will be baseline data and cannot be compared with results from the preceding year.
- E. The district further extended its capacity for the collection, dissemination, and effective use of data through the Grade 3 Collaboration Project. The district chose to focus on grade 3 literacy because grade 3 reading is a leading indicator of future literacy achievement, because of the centrality of literacy in the AIP, and because of the low percentage of Holyoke's students proficient on the grade 3 ELA MCAS.⁶
- 1. The district gathered all grade 3 teachers and presented them with data for each of their students on the first ELA interim assessment, their BAS level, their ELL status and level, and their special education status and disability information.
 - 2. Teachers began the process of recording each student's data on a chart and determining from that data each student's most critical need. It was understood that teachers did not have time during that professional development session to complete the analysis for each of their students.
 - 3. Teachers then moved from documenting each student's most critical need to recording on the charts a specific short-term goal for each student.
 - 4. When teachers had completed the charts in their schools, grade 3 teachers, working from their charted understanding of their individual students' needs and goals, planned the literacy interventions for their school's grade 3 students. Teachers meet regularly in their schools to assess and modify the implementation of their intervention plans.

Impact: When teachers and administrators have available and are trained to use data to monitor their students' progress and to determine their individual needs, they are then equipped to make decisions concerning classroom instruction and concerning recommendations for interventions and support for individual students. At the time of the review team site visit, teachers had little data to measure progress during the course of the current year. This meant that teachers' classroom instruction was less well informed than it might have been if formative data had been available.

Human Resources and Professional Development

- 15. Although the district has successfully implemented many of the key elements of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework, it is struggling to maintain adherence to regulatory timelines and expectations as additional components are introduced.**

⁶ According to ESE data, from 2011 to 2013 grade 3 ELA proficiency in Holyoke declined from 22 percent in 2011 to 20 percent in 2012 to 13 percent in 2013.

- A. Administrators acknowledged that the district has not met ESE's revised timelines and guidelines for implementing district-determined measures of student learning, growth, and achievement, a requirement of the state Educator Evaluation Framework. Appropriate DDMs have not been developed or piloted.
- B. Although the Massachusetts educator evaluation regulations (603 CMR 35.07) require the use of student feedback as a source of evidence in educators' evaluations and staff feedback to inform administrators' evaluations, administrators reported that no action is currently underway in the district to meet this requirement.
- C. Administrators indicated that a strained relationship with the Holyoke Teachers' Association (HTA) has had a negative impact on the district's attempts to implement these educator evaluation components. As mentioned in the Leadership and Governance findings, a joint labor-management team to oversee the implementation of the new educator evaluation system no longer meets.

Impact: The district's early success implementing an educator evaluation system aligned to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework reflects its commitment to achieving the instructional practice improvement goals articulated in its Accelerated Improvement Plan. Continued professional growth and systemic improvement, however, are contingent upon the district and the Holyoke Teachers' Association developing and maintaining a more productive and appropriately collaborative partnership.

16. Teachers currently have little direct participation or formal collaboration in the overall planning, design, or implementation of professional development programs and services at the district level.

- A. Interviewees reported that the district collects teacher input on professional development (PD); teachers register their professional development needs through an online PD system. However, as a rule, teachers are not involved in the direction, design, and delivery of PD at the district level.
- B. On the 2014 TELL Mass survey of working conditions, only 55 percent of responding Holyoke teachers agreed that "The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about professional development," and 43 percent agreed that "Sufficient resources are available for PD in my school."
- C. The district's PD program is led by the director of talent and professional development in conjunction with the assistant superintendent and the DILT.
 - 1. Teachers told the team that some teachers were on a PD committee last year but "there are no teacher representatives now."
 - 2. Interviewees said that the district's PD program had previously been created in part in 2013-2014, according to the terms of the HTA collective bargaining agreement, by a joint

Teacher/Administrator Professional Development Steering Committee. Administrators acknowledged that the committee had become “dysfunctional” and that the present model was created in order to make the comprehensive changes that were required.

3. District leaders indicated that although the present PD governance structure at the district level is admittedly “top down” and directive it is also “transitional” and that the goal is to include teacher leaders in a future PD steering committee, thereby providing faculty with a role that is direct, active, integral, and appropriate to a meaningful partnership in district professional growth programs and initiatives.

Impact: Future progress and the continued betterment of district PD programs and services are more likely if teachers are provided with appropriate opportunities to become meaningfully involved in the process and see themselves as active partners in PD planning, design, and implementation at the district level.

Financial and Asset Management

17. Budget presentations highlighted estimated revenues, major initiatives, and how resources were to be reallocated. The documentation consisted of PowerPoint presentations and detailed budgets and staffing for each line item, but budgetary history and trends, needs, and reasons for grant fund carryovers were not available.

- A. The final document available for the public hearing included spreadsheets with proposed budgets, class sizes, and staffing by line item for each school and program, and the allocation of grants.
 1. The document did not make the impact of proposed reallocations and initiatives clear because it did not include historical data on previous budgets and staffing as a comparison to those proposed. For example, the significance of the loss of librarians and of reductions in teachers and custodians at the school level was not clear since the data could not be compared to current or previous levels. The document did not indicate areas that had been under-or-over-budgeted in the past.
 2. Administrators said that historical data had been included in previous years, but was omitted this year in part because of the zero-based process and the use of average salaries instead of actuals in the budget lines.
 3. While details of grant and fund expenditures were itemized, the document did not include summaries of grant and revolving fund revenues.
 4. District needs, such as stabilizing enrollment and an alternative education program, were not addressed in the documents; nor were the reasons for carryovers of funds from one year to the next.

- B.** The presentation of the budget to the school committee at its public hearing included PowerPoint presentations describing estimated revenues and the deficit, reallocations of school and grant funds to eliminate the deficit, and the reorganization of district leadership.
1. An initial presentation on available revenues for the school budget was made to the Resources and Capital Building subcommittee and summarized for the full committee in April, and it included the priorities for the district to raise the quality of instruction, to strengthen supports, and to address the funding gap. It highlighted a projected deficit of \$4-5 million.
 2. Subsequent PowerPoint presentations and discussions with the subcommittee gave an overview of the proposed leadership reorganization, equitable elementary class sizes and special education caseloads, and high school reductions.
 3. The public hearing on the school budget in June included a PowerPoint presentation summarizing priorities, available revenues and the funding gap, enrollment and class size data, the reorganization of leadership, staffing reductions and consolidations, and proposals for expanding preschool and dual language programs. Detail on staffing and budget proposals for schools and programs was also made available.
 4. The superintendent gave presentations around the city on the state of the schools, including strategic objectives and priorities of the district, achievement and enrollment data, and the budget gap.
 5. The final document, including PowerPoint presentations and detail, is available to the public on the district website.
- C.** The school committee has not recently received regular updates on current and projected expenditures or balances, in part because of recent upgrades in the accounting system.

Impact: The subcommittee, the school committee, and the public received presentations on the major issues in the budget, which can help generate support for district initiatives. More comprehensive documentation for budget presentations would strengthen the district's case for funding, and provide more opportunity for the public to understand the district's action plan and the resource allocation decisions that support it, particularly in the overall context of budget cuts.

Recommendations

Leadership and Governance

- 1. District leadership and the Holyoke Teachers' Association must develop a culture of professional collaboration and cooperation in which they work together as partners to promote higher levels of student achievement, advance the goals of the Accelerated Improvement Plan, and meet their shared obligation to implement important ESE initiatives.**
 - A.** Progress in advancing district initiatives, including educator evaluation and professional development, has been hindered by an absence of meaningful teacher involvement and constructive participation by the Holyoke Teachers' Association (HTA). District and union leadership must begin to work together and assume shared responsibility for improving student learning and for creating the systems and positive, productive professional climate essential to advancing the district's improvement goals and priorities.
 1. District leaders and the Holyoke Teachers' Association should work collaboratively to plan key district initiatives. Teachers should play an active role in planning and implementing the district systems designed to improve student achievement.
 2. See further details in the Human Resources and Professional Development recommendations section.

Benefit: Shared understanding and mutual agreement between district leaders and the Holyoke Teachers' Association about the most effective way to accomplish the district's goals will help to build widespread support for district initiatives. When teachers' input informs district planning in a meaningful way, there will be an increased likelihood of effective implementation and increased student achievement.

Curriculum and Instruction

- 2. The district should continue its work to complete K-12 English language arts and ELL curricula so all students have access to a comprehensive and aligned curriculum.**
 - A.** The district should complete the ELL curriculum for grades 6-12.
 - B.** The district should complete the development of ELA model curriculum units K-3, the articulation into curriculum maps of current ELA specifications for grades 5-8, and the acquisition of middle school literacy materials to meet ELA teachers' instructional needs.
 - C.** The district should consider deepening its initial work to align its science curriculum to the draft 2016 science, technology, and engineering curriculum frameworks.

Recommended resources:

- The *World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development Standards Implementation Guide (Part I)* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/wida/Guidance-p1.pdf>) provides general information about the WIDA ELD standards framework, expectations for district implementation, and available support.
- The *World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Download Library* (<http://www.wida.us/downloadLibrary.aspx>) provides resources and materials for ELL educators, including standards, guiding principles, sample items, and CAN DO descriptors.
- *Useful WIDA ELD Standards Resources from the Download Library* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/wida/DownloadLibrary.html>) can be used as a type of recommended reading list for educators new to the WIDA ELD standards who are interested in developing a deeper understanding of the framework's components and how to apply them into classroom instruction and assessment.
- ESE's *Common Core State Standards Initiative* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/commoncore/>) includes links to several resources designed to support the transition to the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, which incorporate the Common Core.
- *Creating Curriculum Units at the Local Level* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/mcu_guide.pdf) is a guidance document that can serve as a resource for professional study groups, as a reference for anyone wanting to engage in curriculum development, or simply as a way to gain a better understanding of the process used to develop Massachusetts' Model Curriculum Units.
- *Creating Model Curriculum Units* (<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTuqmiQ9ssquWrLjKc9h5h2cSpDVZqe6t>) is a series of videos that captures the collaboration and deep thinking by curriculum design teams over the course of a full year as they worked to develop Massachusetts' Model Curriculum Units. The series includes videos about developing essential questions, establishing goals, creating embedded performance assessments, designing lesson plans, selecting high-quality materials, and evaluating the curriculum unit.
- *Model Curriculum Units* (http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTuqmiQ9ssqvX_Yjra4nBfqQPwc4auUBu) is a video series that shows examples of the implementation of Massachusetts' Model Curriculum Units.
- The *Model Curriculum Unit and Lesson Plan Template* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/MCUtemplate.pdf>) includes Understanding by Design elements. It could be useful for Holyoke's curriculum development and revision.

- ESE's *Quality Review Rubrics* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/rubrics/>) can support the analysis and improvement of curriculum units.

Benefits to the Holyoke Public School District for implementing this recommendation would include updated and clearly articulated alignment of K-12 curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. Completion of this work will enable the district to implement current and comprehensive curricula in all classrooms. As a result, all students will have equal access to a high quality education that promotes higher levels of achievement and enables them to be college and career ready.

3. To improve instruction and ultimately student achievement, the district should further articulate the district instructional model and support teachers in its implementation.

- A.** The district should continue to use its identified best practices to deepen teachers' understanding of effective instruction.
1. Particular emphasis should be placed on the ways in which these practices can be used to address students' individual learning styles and needs, increase instructional rigor, and engage students in higher order thinking.
 2. The district might use grade level, department, and faculty meetings, common planning time, and professional development days for this purpose.
 - a. One possible strategy for deep analysis of the instructional model is to use meeting time to watch videos of effective instructional strategies and then follow up with discussion. Teachers might also be invited to participate in walkthroughs and follow-up debriefing activities. Shared professional readings and subsequent discussions can also strengthen teachers' understanding of key instructional strategies.
 - b. The district should continue to use directors and ILSs to model best practice in classrooms and to provide team, grade level, and department coaching, as well as one-on-one support.
 - c. Administrators are encouraged to provide more time for teachers to observe effective practice in classrooms.
 3. The district should continue to provide professional development to deepen educators' understanding of instructional strategies and district expectations.
 4. As the instructional model evolves, teachers should be encouraged to tailor it based on their students' learning styles and needs in order to engage all students in rigorous content.

Recommended resources:

- *The Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.pdf>) describe, identify, and characterize what high quality learning experiences should look like for educators.

- The *PLC Expansion Project* website (<http://plcexpansionproject.weebly.com/>) is designed to support schools and districts in their efforts to establish and sustain cultures that promote Professional Learning Communities.
- *PBS LearningMedia* (<http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/>) is a free digital media content library that provides relevant educational resources for PreK-12 teachers. The flexible platform includes high-quality content tied to national curriculum standards, as well as professional development courses.
- *Quick Reference Guide: Educator Evaluation & Professional Development* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/QRG-ProfessionalDevelopment.pdf>) describes how educator evaluation and professional development can be used as mutually reinforcing systems to improve educator practice and student outcomes.
- *The Relationship between High Quality Professional Development and Educator Evaluation* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-aDxtEDncg&list=PLTuqmiQ9ssqt9EmOcWkDEHPKBqRvurebm&index=1>)

Benefits of implementing this recommendation include a common and deep understanding among administrators and teachers of what constitutes good teaching. A district that prioritizes high quality instruction for all students develops and sustains a culture of continuous improvement that results in increased student achievement and growth.

Assessment

- 4. The district should continue on the path of developing and administering formative assessments and should consider increasing the number of assessments to four or more per year. The district should continue and expand the professional development and support it provides to help teachers use student performance data effectively.**
 - A. The Teaching and Learning Team, under the direction of the assistant superintendent, should complete the development, administration, and analysis of the remaining two interim assessments for the 2014-2015 school year.
 1. The district data analyst should again provide and disseminate comprehensive reports illustrating the results.
 2. Staff at the district, school, and classroom levels should examine the results and make decisions appropriate to their roles. Most importantly, teachers' analysis of the data should inform their instruction and ensure that student needs are addressed.
 - a. Assessment results should also be used to determine individual remedial and enrichment opportunities for students.

- B. The district should consider expanding the number of interim assessments to four or more in order to provide teachers with current data more frequently throughout the year.
- C. The district should use the Grade 3 Collaboration Project as a model for other grades and subjects.

Recommended resource:

- ESE's *Assessment Literacy Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/webinar/PartI-GapAnalysis.pdf>) is intended to support districts in understanding where their educators fit overall on a continuum of assessment literacy. After determining where the district as a whole generally falls on the continuum, districts can determine potential next steps.

Benefits from implementing this recommendation will include the frequent availability of data with which teachers can target curriculum and instruction based on students' progress and needs, as well as professional development and support to guide teachers' use of data. Principals and ILSs will have up-to-date information, including proficiency levels of individual students and classrooms, which can help them to target professional development and support for teachers. District administrators will have a comprehensive districtwide view of student progress by content area, which can inform district improvement planning.

Human Resources and Professional Development

5. District leadership and the Holyoke Teachers' Association must work together to implement the state Educator Evaluation Framework and to develop and implement a district professional development plan.

- A. The joint labor-management team, whose responsibility was to oversee the implementation of the educator evaluation system, should be restored. In addition to providing an effective and appropriate forum for identifying problems and generating constructive solutions, it could also be empowered to develop the plans needed to properly implement a system aligned to the state educator evaluation framework.
 - 1. The district should prioritize the establishment of a formal process and structure through which teachers and curriculum leaders can work together to develop and implement a comprehensive set of DDMs that meet all current ESE expectations, guidelines, and timetables. Positive and clear communication from district leadership to educators about the purpose and uses of the DDMs will increase teacher buy-in to the DDM process.
 - 2. Similarly, a collaborative structure and process should be established to plan for the use of student feedback in the educator evaluation process.

3. The district should create a new professional development steering committee led by the director of talent and professional development and including district and building administrators and teachers representing the elementary, middle, and high schools. This joint committee would create important leadership opportunities for teachers and would provide a formal structure for collaboration by teachers and administrators in the planning, design, and implementation of district professional development programs and support services.

Recommended resources:

- *Labor-Management-Community Collaboration in Springfield Public Schools* (<http://www.renniecenter.org/research/LaborMgmtCommunityCollab.pdf>) is a case study from the Rennie Center describing how a district improved collaboration, communication, and relationships among adult stakeholders with the goal of improved student achievement.
- ESE's *District-Determined Measures and Student Impact Rating* web pages (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/> and <http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/sir/>) provide information and resources to support planning and implementation.
- ESE's *Student and Staff Feedback* webpage (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/feedback/>) provides guidance on the incorporation of student and staff feedback into the evaluation process and includes a set of valid and reliable student and staff surveys aligned to the Massachusetts Standards of Effective Practice.
- ESE's *Educator Evaluation Implementation Surveys for Teachers and Administrators* (available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/>) were developed by SRI International, an independent non-profit organization studying implementation of the new Educator Evaluation Framework in Massachusetts. The surveys have been adapted into tools for schools and districts to use to capture educator perceptions about and experiences with the evaluation framework. Information from these surveys can be used to target district resources and supports where most needed to strengthen implementation.
- ESE's *Professional Development Self- Assessment Guidebook* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/dsac/pd/PDProviderGuide.pdf>) provides tools for analyzing professional development offerings' alignment with the Massachusetts High-Quality Professional Development Standards (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.html>), the Educator Evaluation Framework, and the Standards and Indicators of Effective Practice.

Benefits: Holyoke's teachers and the teachers' association should be partners in the essential work of revitalizing the district's schools. By collaboratively planning the district's improvement strategies and assuming joint responsibility for improving student academic achievement, educators and educational leaders will together be better able to overcome the many challenges facing the district, advance the strategic goals of the AIP, and ultimately determine the future of Holyoke's public schools.

Financial and Asset Management

6. The district's aggressive public information campaigns on its needs and proposed budgets should continue; however, documentation for proposed budgets should include more detailed data on historical expenditures, budgets, and staffing levels for comparison purposes, as well as explanations for projected carryovers of grant funds to the subsequent year.

- A.** The superintendent is encouraged to continue making presentations of district needs and budget proposals throughout the city in order to raise awareness of the needs of the schools and their accomplishments.
 - 1. Those presentations, along with subcommittee and school committee discussions, should include district successes as well as its needs and proposals for meeting them.
 - 2. In addition to providing opportunities for public discussion of needs and proposed solutions, the public meetings will help increase public support for the schools and needed programs.
- B.** Budget documentation should restore historical budget and staffing trends for comparison purposes, making this information accessible to the school committee and the public.

Benefits from implementing this recommendation would include a better understanding on the part of the public, school committee, and city officials of the successes, needs, and programs of schools and the district, and ultimately stronger support for school budgets.

Appendix A: Review Team, Activities, Schedule, Site Visit

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from January 20-23, 2015, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. Dr. Magdalene Giffune, leadership and governance
2. Dr. Michelle Kingsland-Smith, curriculum and instruction
3. Patricia Williams, assessment, *review team coordinator*
4. Dr. Frank Sambuceti, human resources and professional development
5. Lenora Jennings, student support
6. Dr. George Gearhart, financial and asset management
7. Dr. Thomas Pandiscio, instruction
8. Dr. Janet Smith, instruction

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: director of finance, director of state and federal grants, account manager.

The team conducted interviews with the following members of the school committee: vice-chair, four members.

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers' association: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, executive board at-large, and grievance coordinator.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of ELA and Humanities, elementary STEM director, director of early childhood, director of ELE, director of special education, secondary math director, assistant director of special education, instructional data analyst, director of student services, assistant director of student services, full service community district director, director of after-school and out-of-school programs, and director of human resources.

The team visited the following schools: Metcalf (K), Lawrence (K-3), Peck (grades 4-8), Donahue (K-8), Kelly (K-8), McMahon (K-8), Sullivan (K-8), White (K-8), Dean Vocational Technical High School (grades 9-12), and Holyoke High School (grades 9-12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with 10 principals and focus groups with 37 elementary school teachers, 28 middle school teachers, and 52 high school teachers.

The team observed 113 classes in the district: 26 at the 2 high schools, at the 31 at the middle level, and 56 at the elementary school level.

The review team analyzed multiple data sets and reviewed numerous documents before and during the site visit, including:

- Student and school performance data, including achievement and growth, enrollment, graduation, dropout, retention, suspension, and attendance rates.
- Data on the district's staffing and finances.
- Published educational reports on the district by ESE, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and the former Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA).
- District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, handbooks, school schedules, and the district's end-of-year financial reports.
- All completed program and administrator evaluations, and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations.

Site Visit Schedule

- Tuesday 1/20/15: Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; review of personnel files; interview with teachers' association; and visits to Lawrence and Peck schools for classroom observations.
- Wednesday 1/21/15: Interviews with district staff and principals; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; parent focus group; and visits to McMahon, Kelly, and Peck schools for classroom observations.
- Thursday 1/22/15: Interviews with city personnel; interviews with school leaders; interview with school committee members; visits to Donahue, Peck, Metcalf, Sullivan, and White schools for classroom observations.
- Friday 1/23/15: Interviews with school leaders; district review team meeting; visits to McMahon, Kelly, and Lawrence schools for classroom observations; emerging themes meeting with district leaders and principals.
- Monday 1/26/15: Visits to Holyoke High School and Dean Vocational Technical High School for classroom observations.

Appendix B: Enrollment, Performance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Holyoke Public Schools
2014-2015 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

Student Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
African-American	174	3.1%	83,556	8.7%
Asian	46	0.8%	60,050	6.3%
Hispanic	4,391	78.8%	171,036	17.9%
Native American	2	0.0%	2,238	0.2%
White	908	16.3%	608,453	63.7%
Native Hawaiian	--	--	930	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	52	0.9%	29,581	3.1%
All Students	5,573	100.0%	955,844	100.0%

Note: As of October 1, 2014

**Table B1b: Holyoke Public Schools
2014-2015 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations**

Student Groups	District			State		
	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of District	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of State
Students w/ disabilities	1,364	28.4%	24.1%	165,060	--	17.3%
Low Income	4,307	89.6%	77.3%	--	--	--
ELLs and Former ELLs	1,590	33.1%	28.5%	81,146	--	8.5%
All high needs students	4,808	100.0%	85.0%	--	--	--

Notes: As of October 1, 2014. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 5,657; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 966,391.

**Table B2a: Holyoke Public Schools
English Language Arts Performance, 2011-2014**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	State 2014	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
3	CPI	365	56.8	57.9	57.1	55.7	82.6	-1.1	-1.4
	P+	365	22.0%	20.0%	13.0%	15.0%	57.0%	-7.0%	2.0%
4	CPI	406	55.5	55.2	52	48.6	79.1	-6.9	-3.4
	P+	406	18.0%	20.0%	17.0%	13.0%	54.0%	-5.0%	-4.0%
	SGP	340	35	41	38	32	49	-3	-6
5	CPI	369	60.4	60.3	60.2	54.8	84.5	-5.6	-5.4
	P+	369	26.0%	25.0%	24.0%	21.0%	64.0%	-5.0%	-3.0%
	SGP	315	38	43	41	30	50	-8	-11
6	CPI	345	63	59	61.5	62.5	85.8	-0.5	1
	P+	345	27.0%	23.0%	29.0%	26.0%	68.0%	-1.0%	-3.0%
	SGP	277	47	47	42	41	50	-6	-1
7	CPI	372	72.7	70.5	71	68.6	88.3	-4.1	-2.4
	P+	372	37.0%	36.0%	37.0%	35.0%	72.0%	-2.0%	-2.0%
	SGP	318	51	57	51	48	50	-3	-3
8	CPI	391	75.2	76.3	71.1	70.1	90.2	-5.1	-1
	P+	391	45.0%	47.0%	41.0%	42.0%	79.0%	-3.0%	1.0%
	SGP	321	52	49	38.5	42	50	-10	3.5
10	CPI	381	83.9	86.7	91.9	89.6	96	5.7	-2.3
	P+	381	61.0%	63.0%	74.0%	72.0%	90.0%	11.0%	-2.0%
	SGP	233	34	40	45	45	50	11	0
All	CPI	2,629	67.1	67.1	66.7	64.3	86.7	-2.8	-2.4
	P+	2,629	34.0%	34.0%	34.0%	32.0%	69.0%	-2.0%	-2.0%
	SGP	1,804	44	46	43	39	50	-5	-4

Notes: The number of students included in CPI and percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* (P+) calculations may differ from the number of students included in median SGP calculations. A median SGP is not calculated for students in grade 3 because they are participating in MCAS tests for the first time.

**Table B2b: Holyoke Public Schools
Mathematics Performance, 2011-2014**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	State 2014	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
3	CPI	364	63	51.9	62	61.1	85.1	-1.9	-0.9
	P+	364	32.0%	20.0%	28.0%	31.0%	68.0%	-1.0%	3.0%
4	CPI	408	54.8	55.9	60.2	58.5	79.6	3.7	-1.7
	P+	408	16.0%	18.0%	21.0%	22.0%	52.0%	6.0%	1.0%
	SGP	343	42	36	63	44	50	2	-19
5	CPI	375	52.6	54.3	59.6	51	80.4	-1.6	-8.6
	P+	375	19.0%	21.0%	26.0%	22.0%	61.0%	3.0%	-4.0%
	SGP	319	45	39.5	43	38	50	-7	-5
6	CPI	344	57	57.8	58.4	61.4	80.2	4.4	3
	P+	344	24.0%	27.0%	29.0%	30.0%	60.0%	6.0%	1.0%
	SGP	274	64	56	59	51	50	-13	-8
7	CPI	372	52.6	55.7	50.1	46.4	72.5	-6.2	-3.7
	P+	372	18.0%	21.0%	19.0%	16.0%	50.0%	-2.0%	-3.0%
	SGP	321	57	60	40	46	50	-11	6
8	CPI	392	53.5	55.7	59.7	54	74.7	0.5	-5.7
	P+	392	24.0%	23.0%	31.0%	22.0%	52.0%	-2.0%	-9.0%
	SGP	334	66	63.5	72	56	50	-10	-16
10	CPI	376	75.6	74.5	76	77.5	90	1.9	1.5
	P+	376	55.0%	48.0%	54.0%	55.0%	79.0%	0.0%	1.0%
	SGP	235	52	52.5	37	39	50	-13	2
All	CPI	2,631	58.2	58.3	60.9	58.5	80.3	0.3	-2.4
	P+	2,631	27.0%	26.0%	30.0%	28.0%	60.0%	1.0%	-2.0%
	SGP	1,826	54	51	53	45	50	-9	-8

Notes: The number of students included in CPI and percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* (P+) calculations may differ from the number of students included in median SGP calculations. A median SGP is not calculated for students in grade 3 because they are participating in MCAS tests for the first time.

**Table B2c: Holyoke Public Schools
Science and Technology/Engineering Performance, 2011-2014**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2011	2012	2013	2014	State 2014	4-Year Trend	2 Year Trend
5	CPI	373	48.9	56.3	53.4	45.1	79	-3.8	-8.3
	P+	373	11.0%	18.0%	12.0%	9.0%	53.0%	-2.0%	-3.0%
8	CPI	389	44.5	42.4	47	44.9	72.4	0.4	-2.1
	P+	389	6.0%	7.0%	11.0%	9.0%	42.0%	3.0%	-2.0%
10	CPI	341	63.9	62.6	70.4	74.9	87.9	11	4.5
	P+	341	27.0%	20.0%	33.0%	45.0%	71.0%	18.0%	12.0%
All	CPI	1,103	52.2	54	56.6	54.2	79.6	2	-2.4
	P+	1,103	15.0%	15.0%	18.0%	20.0%	55.0%	5.0%	2.0%

Notes: P+ = percent *Proficient* or *Advanced*. Students participate in STE MCAS tests in grades 5, 8, and 10 only. Median SGPs are not calculated for STE.

**Table B3a: Holyoke Public Schools
English Language Arts (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2011-2014**

Group and Measure			Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2011	2012	2013	2014	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	2,416	64.1	65	64.1	62	-2.1	-2.1
		P+	2,416	29.0%	30.0%	29.0%	28.0%	-1.0%	-1.0%
		SGP	1,649	44	46	43	39	-5	-4
	State	CPI	241,069	77	76.5	76.8	77.1	0.1	0.3
		P+	241,069	48.0%	48.0%	48.0%	50.0%	2.0%	2.0%
		SGP	183,766	46	46	47	47	1	0
Low Income	District	CPI	2,334	64.1	65	64.3	61.9	-2.2	-2.4
		P+	2,334	29.0%	31.0%	30.0%	28.0%	-1.0%	-2.0%
		SGP	1,597	44	47	44	39	-5	-5
	State	CPI	189,662	77.1	76.7	77.2	77.5	0.4	0.3
		P+	189,662	49.0%	50.0%	50.0%	51.0%	2.0%	1.0%
		SGP	145,621	46	45	47	47	1	0
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	704	51.2	52.7	51.5	44.9	-6.3	-6.6
		P+	704	7.0%	8.0%	9.0%	5.0%	-2.0%	-4.0%
		SGP	409	38	37	36	29	-9	-7
	State	CPI	90,777	68.3	67.3	66.8	66.6	-1.7	-0.2
		P+	90,777	30.0%	31.0%	30.0%	31.0%	1.0%	1.0%
		SGP	66,688	42	43	43	43	1	0
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	900	50.3	52.2	52.2	50.4	0.1	-1.8
		P+	900	10.0%	12.0%	13.0%	13.0%	3.0%	0.0%
		SGP	558	45	46	43	38	-7	-5
	State	CPI	47,477	66.2	66.2	67.4	67.8	1.6	0.4
		P+	47,477	33.0%	34.0%	35.0%	36.0%	3.0%	1.0%
		SGP	32,239	50	51	53	54	4	1
All students	District	CPI	2,629	67.1	67.1	66.7	64.3	-2.8	-2.4
		P+	2,629	34.0%	34.0%	34.0%	32.0%	-2.0%	-2.0%
		SGP	1,804	44	46	43	39	-5	-4
	State	CPI	488,744	87.2	86.7	86.8	86.7	-0.5	-0.1
		P+	488,744	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		SGP	390,904	50	50	51	50	0	-1

Notes: The number of students included in CPI and percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* (P+) calculations may differ from the number of students included in median SGP calculation. State figures are provided for comparison purposes only and do not represent the standard that a particular group is expected to meet.

**Table B3b: Holyoke Public Schools
Mathematics (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2011-2014**

Group and Measure			Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2011	2012	2013	2014	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	2,417	55	56	58.2	56.1	1.1	-2.1
		P+	2,417	22.0%	23.0%	26.0%	24.0%	2.0%	-2.0%
		SGP	1,671	54	51	52	45	-9	-7
	State	CPI	241,896	67.1	67	68.6	68.4	1.3	-0.2
		P+	241,896	37.0%	37.0%	40.0%	40.0%	3.0%	0.0%
		SGP	184,937	46	46	46	47	1	1
Low Income	District	CPI	2,336	55	56.2	58.4	55.9	0.9	-2.5
		P+	2,336	22.0%	23.0%	26.0%	24.0%	2.0%	-2.0%
		SGP	1,618	54	51	52	45	-9	-7
	State	CPI	190,183	67.3	67.3	69	68.8	1.5	-0.2
		P+	190,183	38.0%	38.0%	41.0%	41.0%	3.0%	0.0%
		SGP	146,536	46	45	46	47	1	1
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	704	44.1	46.4	45.1	42.5	-1.6	-2.6
		P+	704	5.0%	5.0%	6.0%	6.0%	1.0%	0.0%
		SGP	416	45.5	43	43	36	-9.5	-7
	State	CPI	91,181	57.7	56.9	57.4	57.1	-0.6	-0.3
		P+	91,181	22.0%	21.0%	22.0%	22.0%	0.0%	0.0%
		SGP	67,155	43	43	42	43	0	1
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	904	44.8	45.9	48.8	46.7	1.9	-2.1
		P+	904	9.0%	10.0%	13.0%	13.0%	4.0%	0.0%
		SGP	564	51	52	53	42.5	-8.5	-10.5
	State	CPI	47,847	62	61.6	63.9	63.8	1.8	-0.1
		P+	47,847	32.0%	32.0%	35.0%	36.0%	4.0%	1.0%
		SGP	32,607	52	52	53	52	0	-1
All students	District	CPI	2,631	58.2	58.3	60.9	58.5	0.3	-2.4
		P+	2,631	27.0%	26.0%	30.0%	28.0%	1.0%	-2.0%
		SGP	1,826	54	51	53	45	-9	-8
	State	CPI	490,288	79.9	79.9	80.8	80.3	0.4	-0.5
		P+	490,288	58.0%	59.0%	61.0%	60.0%	2.0%	-1.0%
		SGP	392,953	50	50	51	50	0	-1

Notes: The number of students included in CPI and percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* (P+) calculations may differ from the number of students included in median SGP calculation. State figures are provided for comparison purposes only and do not represent the standard that a particular group is expected to meet.

**Table B3c: Holyoke Public Schools
Science and Technology/Engineering (All Grades)
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2011-2014**

Group and Measure			Number Included (2014)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2011	2012	2013	2014	4 Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	974	48.3	51.7	53.2	50.4	2.1	-2.8
		P+	974	9.0%	12.0%	14.0%	14.0%	5.0%	0.0%
	State	CPI	100,582	63.8	65	66.4	67.3	3.5	0.9
		P+	100,582	28.0%	31.0%	31.0%	33.0%	5.0%	2.0%
Low Income	District	CPI	933	48.2	51.7	53.4	50.4	2.2	-3
		P+	933	9.0%	12.0%	14.0%	15.0%	6.0%	1.0%
	State	CPI	79,199	62.8	64.5	66.1	66.8	4	0.7
		P+	79,199	28.0%	31.0%	32.0%	33.0%	5.0%	1.0%
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	276	43.9	49	48	42.3	-1.6	-5.7
		P+	276	1.0%	2.0%	4.0%	3.0%	2.0%	-1.0%
	State	CPI	38,628	59.2	58.7	59.8	60.1	0.9	0.3
		P+	38,628	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	22.0%	2.0%	2.0%
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	345	41.1	42.4	42.8	38.8	-2.3	-4
		P+	345	2.0%	5.0%	3.0%	3.0%	1.0%	0.0%
	State	CPI	16,871	50.3	51.4	54	54	3.7	0
		P+	16,871	15.0%	17.0%	19.0%	18.0%	3.0%	-1.0%
All students	District	CPI	1,103	52.2	54	56.6	54.2	2	-2.4
		P+	1,103	15.0%	15.0%	18.0%	20.0%	5.0%	2.0%
	State	CPI	211,440	77.6	78.6	79	79.6	2	0.6
		P+	211,440	52.0%	54.0%	53.0%	55.0%	3.0%	2.0%

Notes: Median SGPs are not calculated for STE. State figures are provided for comparison purposes only and do not represent the standard that a particular group is expected to meet.

**Table B4: Holyoke Public Schools
Annual Grade 9-12 Dropout Rates, 2011-2014**

	School Year Ending				Change 2011-2014		Change 2013-2014		State (2014)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
All students	9.8%	7.7%	9.1%	6.4%	-3.4	-34.7%	-2.7	-29.7%	2.0

Notes: The annual dropout rate is calculated by dividing the number of students who drop out over a one-year period by the October 1 grade 9–12 enrollment, multiplied by 100. Dropouts are those students who dropped out of school between July 1 and June 30 of a given year and who did not return to school, graduate, or receive a GED by the following October 1. Dropout rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers.

**Table B5a: Holyoke Public Schools
Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2011-2014**

Group	Number Included (2014)	School Year Ending				Change 2011-2014		Change 2013-2014		State (2014)
		2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High needs	438	42.0%	47.7%	50.8%	55.5%	13.5	32.1%	4.7	9.3%	76.5%
Low income	418	43.4%	48.0%	51.0%	55.3%	11.9	27.4%	4.3	8.4%	75.5%
Students w/ disabilities	146	13.5%	26.1%	27.1%	34.2%	20.7	153.3%	7.1	26.2%	69.1%
English language learners or Former ELLs	111	24.3%	23.1%	22.0%	37.8%	13.5	55.6%	15.8	71.8%	63.9%
All students	505	49.5%	52.8%	53.8%	60.2%	10.7	21.6%	6.4	11.9%	86.1%

Notes: The four-year cohort graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students in a particular cohort who graduate in four years or less by the number of students in the cohort entering their freshman year four years earlier, minus transfers out and plus transfers in. Non-graduates include students still enrolled in high school, students who earned a GED or received a certificate of attainment rather than a diploma, and students who dropped out. Graduation rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers.

**Table B5b: Holyoke Public Schools
Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2010-2013**

Group	Number Included (2013)	School Year Ending				Change 2010-2013		Change 2012-2013		State (2013)
		2010	2011	2012	2013	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High needs	459	49.9%	47.5%	51.9%	55.6%	5.7	11.4%	3.7	7.1%	79.2%
Low income	445	51.0%	48.9%	51.8%	56.0%	5.0	9.8%	4.2	8.1%	78.3%
Students w/ disabilities	144	24.8%	21.8%	33.8%	30.6%	5.8	23.4%	-3.2	-9.5%	72.9%
English language learners or Former ELLs	100	28.9%	29.6%	26.4%	27.0%	-1.9	-6.6%	0.6	2.3%	70.9%
All students	507	56.1%	54.6%	56.8%	58.2%	2.1	3.7%	1.4	2.5%	87.7%

Notes: The five-year cohort graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students in a particular cohort who graduate in five years or less by the number of students in the cohort entering their freshman year five years earlier, minus transfers out and plus transfers in. Non-graduates include students still enrolled in high school, students who earned a GED or received a certificate of attainment rather than a diploma, and students who dropped out. Graduation rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers. Graduation rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers.

**Table B6: Holyoke Public Schools
Attendance Rates, 2011-2014**

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2011-2014		Change 2013-2014		State (2014)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
All students	90.5%	90.5%	90.5%	91.4%	0.9	1.0%	0.9	1.0%	94.9%

Notes: The attendance rate is calculated by dividing the total number of days students attended school by the total number of days students were enrolled in a particular school year. A student's attendance rate is counted toward any district the student attended. In addition, district attendance rates included students who were out placed in public collaborative or private alternative schools/programs at public expense. Attendance rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers.

**Table B7: Holyoke Public Schools
Suspension Rates, 2011-2014**

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2011-2014		Change 2013-2014		State (2014)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
In-School Suspension Rate	7.2%	7.1%	3.6%	2.5%	-4.7	-65.3%	-1.1	-30.6%	2.1%
Out-of-School Suspension Rate	28.1%	27.3%	21.5%	20.0%	-8.1	-28.8%	-1.5	-7.0%	3.9%

Note: This table reflects information reported by school districts at the end of the school year indicated. Suspension rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers.

Table B8: Holyoke Public Schools
Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2012–2014

	FY12		FY13		FY14	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
Expenditures						
From local appropriations for schools:						
By school committee	\$66,279,111	\$62,793,641	\$69,104,626	\$66,032,249	\$68,100,075	\$67,105,644
By municipality	\$20,779,474	\$21,074,252	\$20,625,256	\$22,982,879	\$22,921,537	\$27,991,183
Total from local appropriations	\$87,058,585	\$83,867,893	\$89,729,882	\$89,015,128	\$91,021,612	\$95,096,827
From revolving funds and grants	--	\$22,891,076	--	\$20,256,153	--	\$20,846,133
Total expenditures	--	\$106,758,969	--	\$109,271,282	--	\$115,942,960
Chapter 70 aid to education program						
Chapter 70 state aid*	--	\$67,536,867	--	\$69,455,778	--	\$69,621,603
Required local contribution	--	\$8,863,130	--	\$9,407,712	--	\$9,463,063
Required net school spending**	--	\$76,399,997	--	\$78,863,490	--	\$79,084,666
Actual net school spending	--	\$76,190,441	--	\$79,433,593	--	\$80,384,902
Over/under required (\$)	--	-\$209,556	--	\$570,104	--	\$1,300,236
Over/under required (%)	--	-0.3	--	0.7	--	1.6

*Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations.

**Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.

Sources: FY12, FY13, FY14 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on ESE website

Data retrieved January 13, 2015

**Table B9: Holyoke Public Schools
Expenditures Per In-District Pupil
Fiscal Years 2012-2014**

Expenditure Category	2012	2013	2014
Administration	\$595	\$601	\$603
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$1,144	\$1,129	\$1,317
Teachers	\$5,763	\$5,845	\$6,015
Other teaching services	\$1,488	\$1,680	\$1,635
Professional development	\$369	\$306	\$324
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	\$820	\$906	\$748
Guidance, counseling and testing services	\$386	\$448	\$513
Pupil services	\$1,556	\$1,832	\$2,057
Operations and maintenance	\$1,143	\$1,242	\$1,305
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	\$2,223	\$2,230	\$2,364
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	\$15,487	\$16,220	\$16,881

Sources: [Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website](#)

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

Learning Environment	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)
1. Tone of interactions between teacher and students and among students is positive & respectful.	ES	2%	0%	98%
	MS	3%	13%	84%
	HS	0%	19%	81%
	Total #	2	9	102
	Total %	2%	8%	90%
2. Behavioral standards are clearly communicated and disruptions, if present, are managed effectively & equitably.	ES	2%	5%	93%
	MS	0%	19%	81%
	HS	4%	23%	73%
	Total #	2	15	96
	Total %	2%	13%	85%
3. The physical arrangement of the classroom ensures a positive learning environment and provides all students with access to learning activities.	ES	4%	4%	93%
	MS	10%	29%	61%
	HS	4%	19%	77%
	Total #	6	16	91
	Total %	5%	14%	81%
4. Classroom rituals and routines promote transitions with minimal loss of instructional time.	ES	7%	9%	84%
	MS	3%	16%	81%
	HS	27%	19%	54%
	Total #	12	15	86
	Total %	11%	13%	76%
5. Multiple resources are available to meet all students' diverse learning needs.	ES	23%	23%	54%
	MS	29%	35%	35%
	HS	81%	12%	8%
	Total #	43	27	43
	Total %	38%	24%	38%
Teaching				
6. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of subject and content.	ES	2%	5%	93%
	MS	6%	10%	84%
	HS	4%	15%	81%
	Total #	4	10	99
	Total %	4%	9%	88%
7. The teacher plans and implements a lesson that reflects rigor and high expectations.	ES	13%	39%	48%
	MS	13%	39%	48%
	HS	12%	38%	50%
	Total #	14	44	55
	Total %	12%	39%	49%

Teaching (continued)	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)
8. The teacher communicates clear learning objective(s) aligned to 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. SEI/language objective(s) are included when applicable.	ES	14%	13%	73%
	MS	16%	3%	81%
	HS	27%	19%	54%
	Total #	20	13	80
	Total %	18%	12%	71%
9. The teacher uses appropriate instructional strategies well matched to learning objective (s) and content.	ES	13%	27%	61%
	MS	10%	23%	68%
	HS	27%	27%	46%
	Total #	17	29	67
	Total %	15%	26%	59%
10. The teacher uses appropriate modifications for ELL and SPED students such as explicit language objective(s); direct instruction in vocabulary; presentation of content at multiple levels of complexity; and, differentiation of content, process, and/or products.	ES	27%	32%	41%
	MS	29%	32%	39%
	HS	54%	31%	15%
	Total #	38	36	39
	Total %	34%	32%	35%
11. The teacher provides multiple opportunities for students' to engage in higher order thinking such as use of inquiry, exploration, application, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation of knowledge or concepts (Bloom's Taxonomy)	ES	32%	43%	25%
	MS	29%	26%	45%
	HS	46%	31%	23%
	Total #	39	40	34
	Total %	35%	35%	30%
12. The teacher uses questioning techniques that require thoughtful responses that demonstrate understanding.	ES	23%	38%	39%
	MS	10%	32%	58%
	HS	38%	19%	42%
	Total #	26	36	51
	Total %	23%	32%	45%
13. The teacher implements teaching strategies that promote a safe learning environment where students give opinions, make judgments, explore and investigate ideas.	ES	16%	23%	61%
	MS	10%	29%	61%
	HS	27%	8%	65%
	Total #	19	24	70
	Total %	17%	21%	62%
14. The teacher paces the lesson to match content and meet students' learning needs.	ES	7%	25%	68%
	MS	3%	29%	68%
	HS	31%	23%	46%
	Total #	13	29	71
	Total %	12%	26%	63%
15. The teacher conducts frequent formative assessments to check for understanding and inform instruction.	ES	30%	27%	43%
	MS	29%	16%	55%
	HS	38%	31%	31%
	Total #	36	28	49
	Total %	32%	25%	43%

Teaching (continued)	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)
16. The teacher makes use of available technology to support instruction and enhance learning.	ES	57%	11%	32%
	MS	45%	26%	29%
	HS	42%	19%	38%
	Total #	57	19	37
	Total %	50%	17%	33%
Learning	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)
17. Students are engaged in challenging academic tasks.	ES	11%	39%	50%
	MS	13%	32%	55%
	HS	19%	50%	31%
	Total #	15	45	53
	Total %	13%	40%	47%
18. Students articulate their thinking verbally or in writing.	ES	23%	32%	45%
	MS	23%	35%	42%
	HS	35%	35%	31%
	Total #	29	38	46
	Total %	26%	34%	41%
19. Students inquire, explore, apply, analyze, synthesize and/or evaluate knowledge or concepts (Bloom's Taxonomy)..	ES	34%	30%	36%
	MS	23%	32%	45%
	HS	42%	42%	15%
	Total #	37	38	38
	Total %	33%	34%	34%
20. Students elaborate about content and ideas when responding to questions.	ES	36%	41%	23%
	MS	29%	35%	35%
	HS	65%	15%	19%
	Total #	46	38	29
	Total %	41%	34%	26%
21. Students make connections to prior knowledge, or real world experiences, or can apply knowledge and understanding to other subjects.	ES	41%	23%	36%
	MS	39%	32%	29%
	HS	54%	31%	15%
	Total #	49	31	33
	Total %	43%	27%	29%
22. Students use technology as a tool for learning and/or understanding.	ES	84%	4%	13%
	MS	71%	16%	13%
	HS	96%	4%	0%
	Total #	94	8	11
	Total %	83%	7%	10%

Learning (continued)	By Grade Span	Evidence		
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent
		(0)	(1)	(2)
23. Students assume responsibility for their own learning whether individually, in pairs, or in groups.	ES	16%	29%	55%
	MS	6%	39%	55%
	HS	23%	23%	54%
	Total #	17	34	62
	Total %	15%	30%	55%
24. Student work demonstrates high quality and can serve as exemplars.	ES	63%	21%	16%
	MS	42%	35%	23%
	HS	64%	12%	24%
	Total #	64	26	22
	Total %	57%	23%	20%